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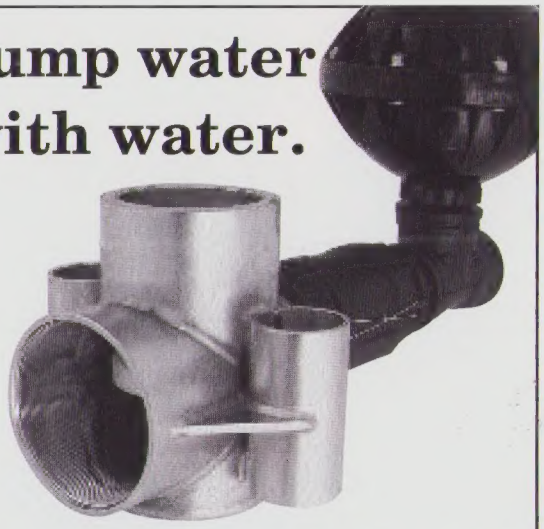

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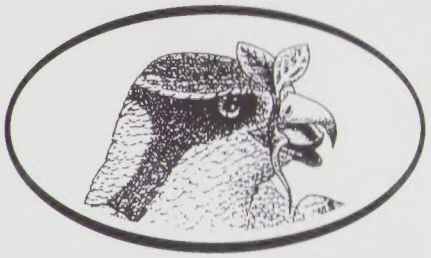

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COVER PHOTOS

Front Cover: Megg and Suni catching geese on the farm. Geese can be a challenge to handle, but their zany personalities also make them a lot of fun to have around, as Jude Aquilina explains on page 19. Megg has found, when it comes to goose catching time, that an extra pair of hands to help makes all the difference. This issue celebrates 30 years of learning, growth, fun and achievement. Enjoy some GR memories on page 6. Photo by Marcel Aucar.

Back Cover: Sandy Kelly, also known as 'the outback angel', has been a GR reader since the first issue. Her indomitable energy and enthusiasm for the outback are an inspiration. Share the memories of Sandy and other inspirational GR readers on page 11.

Edited by Megg Miller and Mary Horsfall.

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GUMNUT GOSSIP

by Megg Miller.

Yes, it's celebration time, an opportunity to get out the parsnip wine and lentil paté and eat, drink and be merry. It's time to toast 30 years of publishing and more than 157 thrilling, nerve-wracking, last-minute deadlines. What a privilege to have been able to keep a specialist magazine like *Grass Roots* in print all this time and to have touched the lives – and been touched in return – by so many wonderful people.

How young and hopeful we were when No 1 was published – and what fun publishing promised to be. All-night sagas in caftans and cheesecloth, fuelled by cheap red or strong coffee and endless slices of crumbly home-made bread. 'What's going on out there?' acquaintances would ask. 'It's one of those communes, isn't it?' As likely as not they would turn up unannounced for dinner and we'd gather at the table that not long before had been hidden under typesetting and mock-ups. Travellers would turn up for the night too: 'We heard you were here and thought we'd break our trip up north'. Many a night was passed discussing utopian ideology and the best method for sprouting mung beans. It was a fantastic time to be young and I can't even look at the early copies of GR without recalling those heady times.

What we never imagined coming out of the first modest issues was the development of a unique sense of community. It's one of our strongest features and it's what you, our readers, contribute in a myriad of little ways. It blossoms from the letters in Feedback and bears fruit in the new friendships forged, the cheery notes exchanged, the sharing of hints, seeds and surplus items. You won't be surprised to know that much of the correspondence we receive carries comments like: 'Love GR, it's better than Prozac', or, 'When I'm down I get out an old issue to read and immediately forget my worries', or, 'It's a great fix – wish it was monthly'.

Grass Roots is the result of teamwork at its best. Our terrific team here couldn't do their jobs so well without the input, ideas and inspiration you all provide. Thanks for caring and making suggestions, taking us to task and pointing out our errors, offering eternal salvation via some rather uncommon religious practices, and for being such keen and active devotees. We're the envy of most other publications because we receive innumerable unsolicited articles and have a stockpile in our filing cabinet that can be called upon to make GR the great reading it is. So a hearty thank-you for supporting us, reading us and contributing so generously to the array of articles.

We can't overlook our advertisers either, as they are an integral part of publishing. We know you eagerly read and use the Grassifieds, and source items and information from display advertisers. Thanks folks for bringing your products and skills to readers' attention; we hope we continue to be as good for you as you are for us.

Finally, the GR team deserve a special thank-you, the small band of fun people who answer your queries, sort out your problems, agonise over your handwriting and genuinely care about you and GR. The magazine wouldn't be as good or interesting, or even get to the printers, without their invaluable assistance.

Enjoy this issue, and raise your cup or champagne glass in our honour – we're looking forward to sharing the next 30 years with you. Cheers!

The GR gang celebrating 30 years in print. Clockwise: Suni, Sabrina, Sue, Mary, David, Noreen and Megg. Photo: Marcel Aucar.

Memorable Moments

by Megg and David Miller, Vic.

Old photo albums are always amusing and illuminating, but nothing can beat *Grass Roots* pics for nostalgia – when all those aspects of our lifestyle we now take for granted were mind boglingly new and daring.

Thirty years of *Grass Roots* – your letters and stories, shared happiness and heartbreak, search for the promised land, along with our editorials and melding together of a seemingly disparate mix of material into a coherent and readable whole. At times those 30 years seemed to have spanned an eternity, in good months it feels as though it was yesterday.

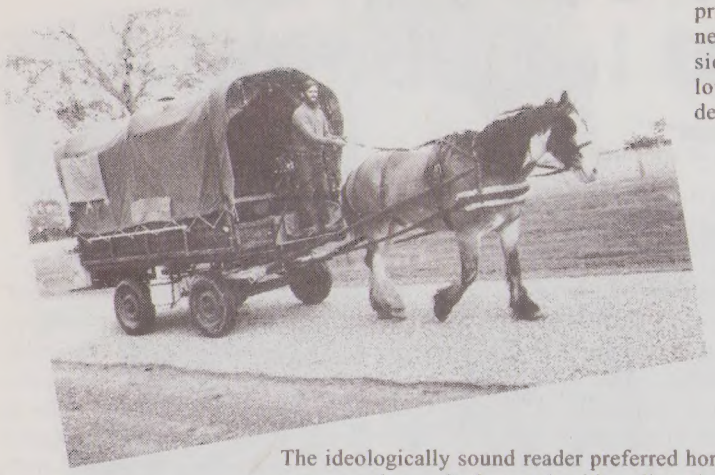
The piles of magazines that encompass 30 years of publishing are testament to what's been printed on self-sufficiency. Surely we've covered it all by now, the mudbricking, the alternative power, the house cow and chicks, chemical-free fruit and veg, the list is truly endless. You've planned it, built it, made it, kept it, eaten it, then completely revised your thoughts about it, and we've been there to put it in print and share the idea or project with other do-it-yourselfers...

So how to pay homage to these decades of clever ideas and gifted, creative people? With our 150th issue celebrated not long ago, we wanted a fresh focus for our festivities, and by chance stumbled on a box holding a range of photos from our past. Words simply couldn't compete with these images of yesteryear. Sit back, smile and reminisce. Can you remember when it was essential to have comfrey growing at the back door, the *Whole Earth Catalogue* on the kitchen table, and be clothed in tie-dyed cheesecloth? If you're too young to have been part of this adventure we hope you can share some of its spirit in this issue.

Megg and David at the time the idea for GR was conceived. We'd just moved to the country and were discovering the vagaries of cooking on a wood stove, keeping stock, and spinning and using fleece from our own coloured flock. Hordes of friends arrived from the city at weekends to visit the rural idyll, eat our food, compare the growth of our comfrey plant with theirs, then leave when jobs had to be done and dishes washed. Who needed sleep – we were young and full of energy.

Part of the new society involved working together to reduce costs. Bulk buying co-ops didn't only offer inexpensive food but a regular meeting place where ideas were exchanged and a sense of community celebrated.

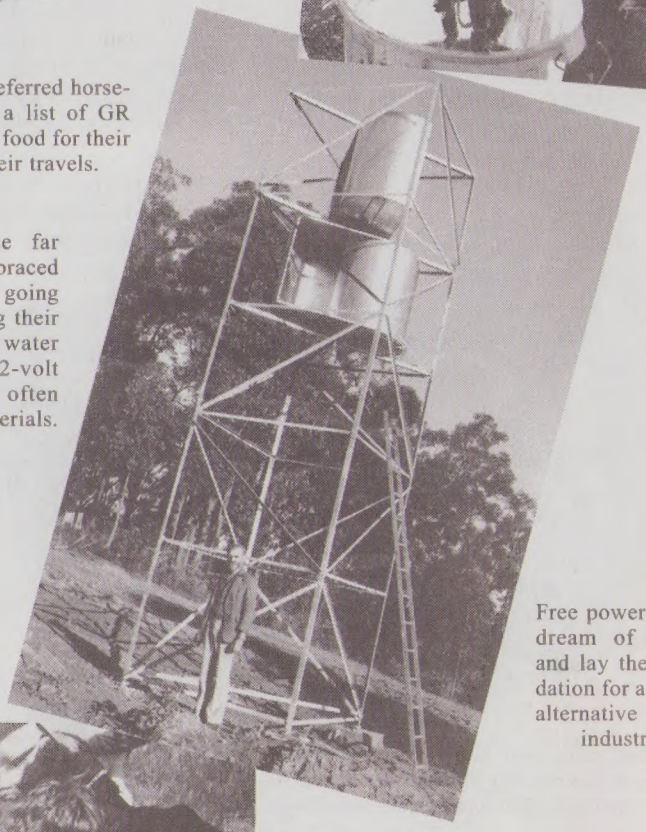
Dropping out provided the opportunity to turn your back on suburban values and try a freer lifestyle outside of the 9 – 5 constraint.



Craft became big in the seventies, its creative process satisfying the need for self-expression. Clothes were lovingly made and decorated, many being works of art.

The ideologically sound reader preferred horsepower and travelled armed with a list of GR contacts where they could get free food for their horse and share stories from their travels.

Bushies or those far from the grid embraced alternative power, going so far as inventing their own solar hot water services and 12-volt power systems, often from recycled materials.



Free power was a dream of many, and lay the foundation for a whole alternative power industry.

Everyone owned a goat, it was easy to keep in a range of situations, ate all the scraps and put milk in the coffee.

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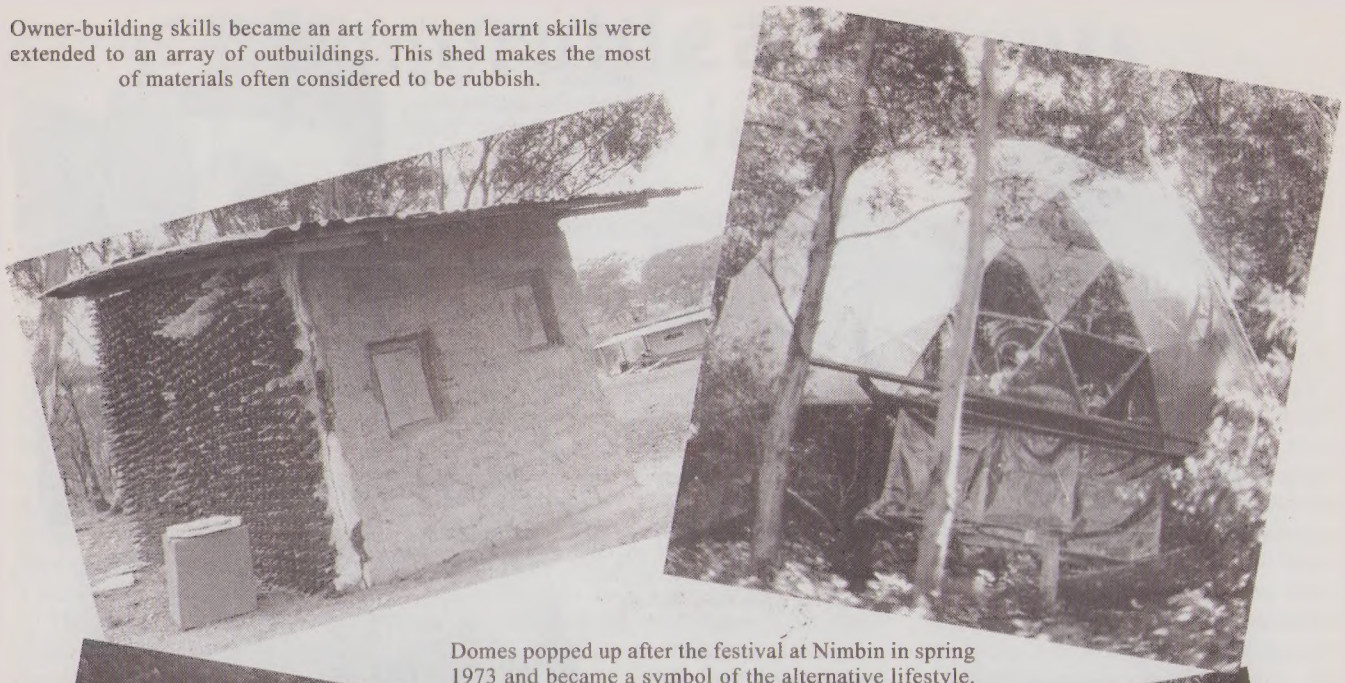
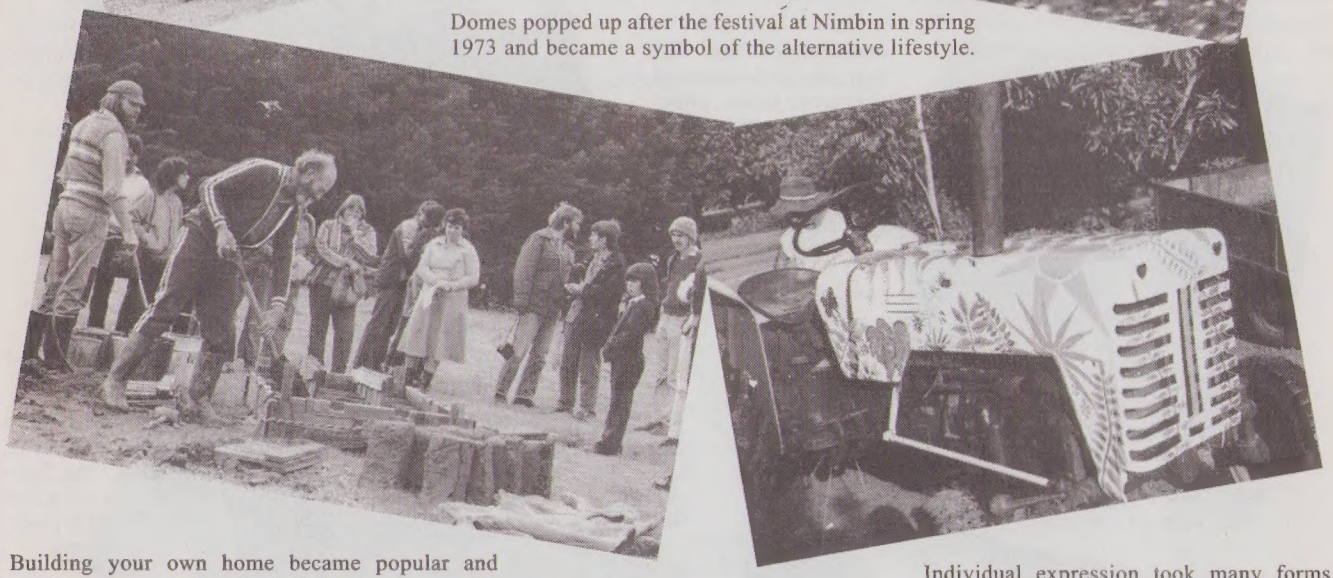
Owner-building skills became an art form when learnt skills were extended to an array of outbuildings. This shed makes the most of materials often considered to be rubbish.



Domes popped up after the festival at Nimbin in spring 1973 and became a symbol of the alternative lifestyle.



Building your own home became popular and mudbrick seemed the ideal choice for those with little money but lots of time and energy.

Individual expression took many forms, even the farm tractor wasn't safe from the artist's brush.

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Grass Roots
A Wonderful Helping Hand

by Jose Robinson, Noosaville, Qld.

I can still recall reading my first *Grass Roots* magazine; it was the very first issue way back in the early 1970s. At this time we had recently left our home of 11 years in the northern suburbs of Brisbane and were heading for a new life on five acres outside Gladstone, Queensland. Three of our five offspring were already independent. The two younger ones, who were still at high school, came with us. My dream of opening my own art gallery came to fruition and I had a superb area at the side of the gallery for teaching art classes.

The 1960s and '70s were times of great change. The younger generation were beginning to find their voice and more and more people were questioning the ethics and values of their time. Many were thinking about the possibility of a different way of life from their parents' era. More freedom from the 9 to 5 grind and the possibility of a self-sufficient lifestyle were contemplated.

Communes were being formed by mixed groups of young people working together and sharing and caring. Couples were moving onto the land with little or no financial backing and often with no knowledge of survival skills. Many, sadly, fell by the wayside and opted to go back to the life they'd known. Yet many with determination did survive and went on to make an incredible success of self-sufficient living on the land.

Hippies, flower-power, the Beetles, psychedelic colour and cheesecloth clothes from India were in. Guys wore long hair and beards, girls wore shapeless caftans. Flares for the guys and girls were in for many years, then later on the reverse came into fashion in the form of stovepipe pants. Jeans became acceptable to wear anywhere.

The whole world was seeing huge changes. At the same time, there was a searching for who we really were.

Jose has been a staunch supporter and a frequent contributor for many years, sharing some of her huge array of craft skills with readers through her articles.

Intense meditation was the go. Tribal music became popular. It was cool to be with it.

Thanks to many helpful *Grass Roots* readers, the magazine was chock full of articles on how to do almost everything: ways to recycle, care for the planet, cook healthy food, make crafty items for a self-sufficient life, and much more. I was so enthralled by the first few issues that later I bought several copies of *The Early Years* (a compilation of the first five issues) to give as gifts to friends. Some of them immediately became hooked after finding what a great amount of usable information was incorporated within those pages.

Grass Roots became our 'bible' around 1979 when we ourselves opted to sell up and go and live a self-sufficient lifestyle on a small island. There, as many readers may recall, we stayed for

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JOSE'S FAVOURITE TANNING METHOD

contributed by Barbara Manuel in GR 6.

• Remove fat and meat particles with a clean, flat knife. This is easiest when the skin is dry.

• Soak the skin overnight and wash the wool until it is clean. This may require a few rinses and washes, either by hand or machine, taking care not to mat or felt the wool if it is at all long.

• Wring out and hang up to dry 'skin-to-skin' until the wool has completely drained and the skin is just starting to dry out.

• Spread out on some paper or plastic, stretch and nail. You will find that this stretches the soft skin and it may require renailing. Make sure there are no wrinkles.

• Mix 250 grams bicarbonate of soda with some lighting kerosene until it is the consistency of unwhipped cream, and spread this onto the skin. Rub this in thoroughly for 5 – 10 minutes. If you're doing more than one skin, you might like to use gloves because the kero takes all the oils from your hands.

• Next, scrape this off and apply a second coat and leave for 12 hours (overnight). This may need covering with a wet bag, or plastic, to prevent it from drying out.

• Scrape this layer off and apply another one, rubbing it in. Repeat this procedure twice a day for 4 days, then once a day for 3 days, making sure all creases are thoroughly rubbed and scraped.

• At the end of this time, if the skin isn't dry, leave it scraped and uncovered until it dries out. Then scrape down thoroughly and take it up.

• If the skin is too stiff, rub it over a blunt implement for a while, or around a verandah post, or with a brick, rasp or knife. It may be washed again to remove the kerosene smell.

• If an extra soft skin is desired, wash before breaking down, then dry the wool but not the skin. Mix 1 part of neatsfoot oil, 1 part of detergent and 2 parts of water, and spread over the skin. As the mixture dries, scrape and work the skin to stretch and break the fibres.

• Comb up the wool, tuft by tuft, using a wool or dog comb.

• To clean, shake vigorously and wash either by hand or machine.

• It is difficult to get good results when this method is used in very hot or very wet conditions.

21 years as sole permanent residents.

We learnt about self-sufficiency from the many useful articles written by other readers, then, around 1980, I received a letter from David Miller asking me if I'd write some articles for the magazine. I was thrilled to be asked, and from then on I became a regular writer for *Grass Roots* as well as several other magazines.

Back in GR 6 (costing only $1 in those days), I read an article on a simple method of tanning skins written by Barbara Manuel. I have used that method on scores of different hides over the years. I have also given the recipe to countless others. Some of the very early articles and hints have remained with me over the years. I always waited very impatiently in those first years when *Grass Roots* was a quarterly; it seemed to take forever before the next issue was due to arrive.

I could name hundreds of excellent articles that have helped us on our way. Whether it was simple soap making, growing vegies or fruit trees, or whatever, it all has been a wonderful helping hand in contributing to making our planet a better place to live.

I can readily bring to mind names of some of the earliest writers for *Grass Roots* – Iris Quigley, Renate Schmidt, Maurice Finkel, Bob Willis and many others all helped in the building of this inspiring magazine. The publication has gone from strength to strength over the three decades of printing. I wish the team many more successful years and my heartiest congratulations on reaching the 30th anniversary. Megg and helpers, a job well done!

Thirty Years Of Grass Roots

From a suburban backyard to a 40,000-acre sheep station, and even to the Philippines – *Grass Roots* readers can be found all over Australia, and beyond. Most of these long-term readers have been loyal supporters since the very first issue and prove there is no such thing as a 'typical GR reader'. Heartfelt thanks to all our readers, wherever and whatever they are, for sharing one thing in common – their devotion to *Grass Roots*.

THE GOOD SHIP GRASS ROOTS

Congratulations on your 30 years of *Grass Roots*. What a wonderful achievement for you all and what a blessing it has been for all that time to everyone who reads it. We only found out that such a magazine existed in 1983 and came in at GR 40. We've been getting it ever since and look forward to every issue. What a revelation to discover that there was a whole community of people all over Australia that thought the same way that we did about most things.

Although we had lived in Sydney, then in Adelaide, around about that time, we'd always lived a fairly simple sort of life, by choice, with DIY and recycling an integral part of it. We've lived without TV since 1972, which seems pretty weird to some of the people that we know, but it is a peaceful way to live. At other times we've lived without a car – legs and bicycles were useful things to have and a bus stop just around the corner helped a lot too. I know that this sort of upbringing taught our children a sort of sturdy self-reliance that they are now passing on to their children.

What I'm trying to say, I suppose, is that after 30 years *Grass Roots* is still flourishing and giving the same sort of encouragement and validation that it started with. Bravo! These qualities are needed so much more in the present climate of uncertainty and change that we have to live with whether we like it or not. I can think of nothing better to say than God bless the good ship *Grass Roots* and all who sail in her. May she long continue. Keep up the good works folks.

Leonie H

Sandy Kelly (with her thumb up) celebrating her 60th birthday.

THE GREATEST READ IN THE UNIVERSE

One fine sunny day some 30 years ago I was browsing through the local paper shop in Lake Cargelligo, NSW, searching for something new to read. *Grass Roots* magazine caught my eye. As I picked it up I felt a sense of peace and calm pass over me, making me stop and wonder about this new little magazine. Now 30 years on I have a lifetime collection of *Grass Roots*, the greatest reading in the universe. They have been carted all over Australia with me.

As I ponder back over my life I can see many ups and downs, along with great personal and work achievements, especially over the past 10 years. My work has taken me out to the isolated and remote communities and stations of our beautiful country. A land that is harsh, most certainly not everyone's cup of tea. I love it and wouldn't want

Sandy Kelly at the Woodford Folk Festival, Qld (2003).

to be anywhere else. The people I have met are the *Grass Roots* people of our land. Like our *Grass Roots* magazine, they are very interesting, knowledgeable, and willing to assist you in every way possible.

Grass Roots is my life and will continue to be my life. It is the foundation of my future, where in 18 months time I will live out my dream and become a retired 'geriatric hippy'. Thank you to you all.

Sandy Kelly (better know as 'The Outback Angel')

THANKS FOR INSPIRATION

Greetings. I was reading the latest edition of *Grass Roots* in which you mentioned your search for continuous readers over the 30 years.

While I was training for Ministry in Melbourne in 1973 my wife heard your initial interview on the radio and mentioned her wish to subscribe, which she did. Following her tragic death, and my sole parenting for a few years, I remarried and my stepdaughter was so taken with the magazine she offered to subscribe and allow me to read her copy, which I do. I also passed over to her the complete collection of previous issues, apart from one or two that friends failed to return after being given an article to read. Thank you for your publication and the inspiration I received from its articles over the years. With every good wish for the next 30 years!

Revd DW Neuendorf

SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE

I can still remember buying the first edition in Sydney on one of my rare days in the city and being so impressed

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I subscribed immediately. I was Noela Allen then, living in the suburbs with two small children and feeling somewhat alienated from the general population. I'd been brought up in a culture of doing and making things for yourself and growing your own vegetables and fruit and having chooks. So we did all that in our suburban backyard.

After my husband left for greener pastures I continued this lifestyle with my two children. When they grew up I found my new partner and moved out to his big block at Wilberforce and introduced him to home-grown vegies.

We went on a long overseas trip and found ourselves restless when we came back. Took a holiday down south and found a block at Braidwood. Bought it within a couple of weeks and spent the next three years visiting every three weeks and holidays. Eventually, seven years ago, we moved down here permanently. Have never regretted it, but it has been a lot of work. We built our own house – a log home – created gardens and became active in the local community. We have 100 acres of bush, which of course brings us into conflict with the native animals and birds. Complete netting is the only answer if you want fruit, vegetables and flowers, especially in the drought. We have lots of tanks so always managed to have water in the house, but the dam went very low.

I always enjoy reading *Grass Roots* even though some ideas are a little too alternative for us. We fit somewhere in the middle. I still have all my magazines, except numbers 22, 23 and 24 seem to have gone missing. I know I lent one once to someone who went missing, but who knows where the others ended up. Strange that just those three together are gone. I will have to sit down some time and read them all again. I think I enjoy the articles on people's lifestyles the most. My partner probably enjoys the more technical informative articles.

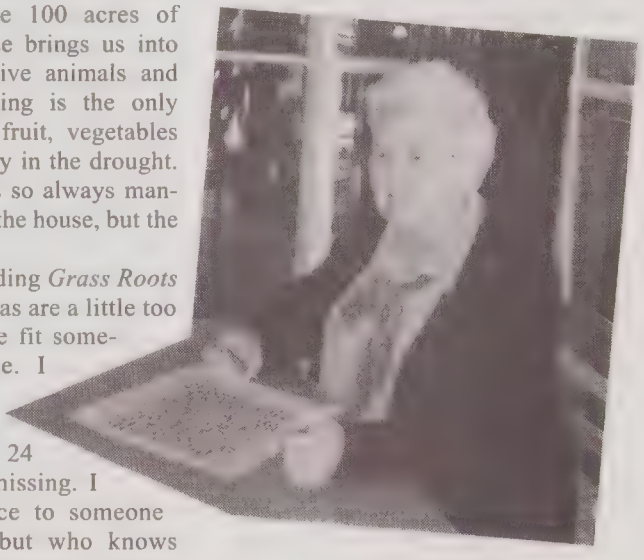
Noela Hoerlein

BASIC COUNTRY LIVING

In 1973 my husband and I had a western NSW property of 40,000 acres with 5000 sheep. Our daughter, living in Townsville, saw *Grass Roots* magazine and was amused by the articles about black sheep and crutching and sent us a copy as a bit of a joke. I was interested by the fact people were going back to the basics of country living I had not long left, having grown up on the land during the Depression followed by World War 2. So I have subscribed ever since and have a complete set of copies. We sold our property in 1983 and had a new home built on the outskirts of Lake Cargelligo on 2½ acres.

As Karen Long wrote in GR 150 of *Grass Roots*: '*Grass Roots* has complemented my life rather than shaped it'. We enjoy the Feedback pages with the helpful hints and cures for everyday ailments. I've used recipes too. My husband was a practical farmer and could fix most things that cropped up. I wrote in some years ago with what to grow to get rid of grasshoppers – you grow larkspurs – the hoppers can't resist eating them and they die on the spot.

Jean Nixon



Jean Nixon (2002).

THE GOOD LIFE

I have been reading and collecting *Grass Roots* from the very first copy. Unfortunately I lost several of the early copies when our home burnt down as the result of a lightning strike. I was able to replace all but issues 1 – 7, but I do have *The Early Years* to make my set complete.

Growing up during the World War 2 period we all learnt to make do and recycle long before it became fashionable, always keeping poultry and an organic garden on a quarter-acre house block through necessity.

After marriage and a growing family and being no longer able to buy raw milk, we bought our first goat. When the goat was attacked by a neighbour's dog we decided to move out of town. We found 46 acres only four miles away, no power or laid-on water but plenty of room for animals and children. We added a few cows and pigs to our growing menagerie.

For 12 years we survived drought and flood and lived the Good Life, then the opportunity came to move to the north coast of NSW where we bought a cream and pig farm. All was well until the bottom fell out of the dairy and beef industry, then our home was burnt down and we managed to sell the land and buy a larger farm where we raised vealers, pigs, Angora and dairy goats, sheep and crops. Eventually, cattle prices improved so we managed quite well, never buying anything that could be homemade. We have always had our own vegies, meat, eggs, butter, bread, and reared eight well-adjusted children.

As the family grew up and left home to start their own families we decided to move to Queensland to be near two of our daughters. Here we concentrated on the dairy goats and rearing a few calves with the milk.

We still have a smaller garden to supply our needs, fertilised by the poultry and goats despite 10 years of almost continuous drought.

My family and myself have enjoyed *Grass Roots* and have met some very nice people through it. We wonder sometimes how the early correspondents have survived over the years and can relate to their dreams of their little place in the country.

Anne Wright

Grace Martin plucking a duck (then).

STILL LOVE GRASS ROOTS

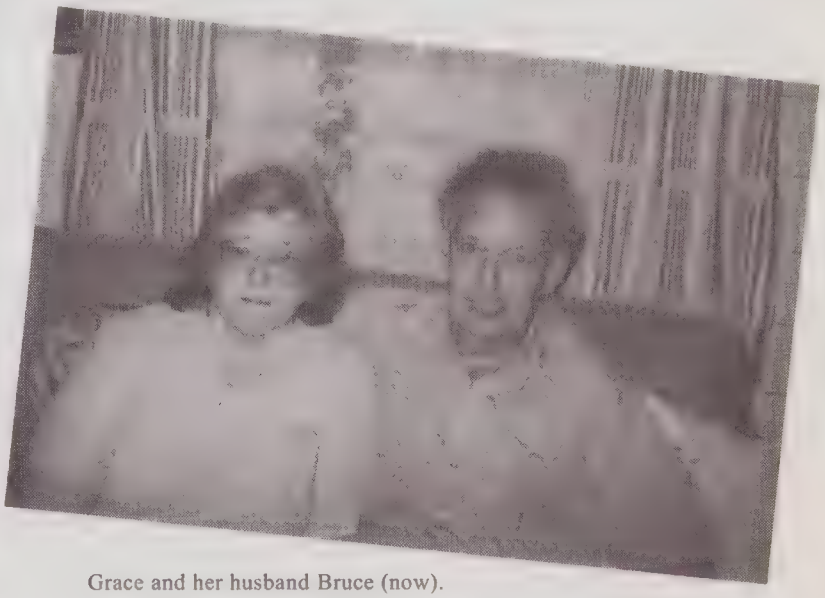
Congratulations on your 30 years of *Grass Roots*. I remember picking up the first copy in a small shop in Hamilton, Victoria, thinking to myself: this is my sort of magazine. Over the years it has brought me new friends, whom I still write to, helpful advice and enjoyment in reading how others fared.

We left the Hamilton area after about five years and made our way up to Trangie in NSW. We were on a sheep station there (Bundemar) then moved over to Nevertire. The boss was forever buying places and moving staff around. Belaringar at Nevertire was just flat country and didn't thrill me at all. Then off to Queensland – Dirranbandi – real wild country – 64,000 acres! Oh boy. But we enjoyed it there. Left there and came back to Warren where Bruce worked on different places. Finally, 16 years ago, we were able to buy here at Trangie and settle in. Our children were only young when we left Mt Martha in Victoria and have now settled in Warren. We have family close by. Life goes on. We are now down to two dogs, after having bred Kelpies. We still have chooks, a garden and a park for the wildlife on our two acres. We still live very simply, pensioners now, married 40 years, still love each other and our family, and still love *Grass Roots*.

Grace Martin

LAUGHTER AND BEAUTIFUL MEMORIES

Today is our 16th wedding anniversary so I went to the newsagent and bought *Grass Roots* magazine, I read Gumnut Gossip and learnt that your 30th anniversary is coming. I cannot resist this opportunity to share my story, for without your magazine I am sure I



Grace and her husband Bruce (now).

would not be here today.

It started when my husband's ex-wife threw GR 41, February 1984, at his face. Luckily, my name and address were in the Penpal column. He wrote to me and we corresponded with each other for two years before he found the courage to tell me that he was looking for a wife. With a smile on my face I wrote back asking him if I was qualified, which he accepted. We became 'mail sweethearts' for a year, then he flew to the Philippines on February 14, 1987 to meet me and my family with an intention of marriage. He stayed with my family for a month and a half while I was working in the city. We married on March 25, 1987 in a civil ceremony and March 28, 1987 in the church.

Since then life has been beautiful. Marriage to me is a union of two hearts, regardless of age, race and religion. I can vouch for it; I am a living proof. My husband now is 87 years old and I am 48 years old. He is Anglo-Saxon white and I am brown skinned. He is Methodist and I am Catholic. We married in a religion we both didn't belong to before our marriage. Now we don't belong to any religion, but we do believe in a supreme being – God. We respect and understand that belief is one's private and personal choice and we don't let it interfere with our relationship.

Charles Richard Moffatt and wife Julieta Facto Moffatt (2003).

Our marriage is not all a bed of roses. Believe me, we have lots of screaming and disagreements, but, best of all, lots and lots of laughter and beautiful memories shared and will be shared for years to come. Now we live in Karama, a northern suburb of Darwin, Northern Territory. Our neighbours are nice and kind, we share plants and cuttings and still talk over the fence and laugh, which I suppose some city people miss these days. Darwin is a blend of everything. It can be a slow life if you choose; it can be fast too. Everyone lives in harmony more or less. Happy 30th birthday *Grass Roots*! Thank you and keep up the good work.

Julieta Facto Moffatt

Two Great Garden Tips

by Bob Rankin, Port Macquarie, NSW.

Save those seedlings from snails and birds with Bob's simple tricks.

I spent an hour weeding the garden one morning and after two days of rain was amazed at the number of snails I found on my cabbages. I had to spend five minutes turning over cabbage leaves and squashing these pests with my trowel and machete. (I learnt to use a machete in the tropics and find it one of the most useful tools in the garden.) I had heard of one effective way of catching snails and slugs by putting out a saucer of stale beer in the garden of an evening but, as a home brewer, I like my own product too much to waste it on snails. Shortly after I came in from the garden that morning, by a remarkable coincidence, I heard an even better way of catching snails and I thought I should pass it on to all you gardeners who might have missed it.

This tip came from the excellent ABC gardening television program I try to watch every Sunday afternoon. To catch the snails in your garden you drive a PVC pipe into the soil so it stands about 300 millimetres high, near where you are troubled by snails. Over the top of the pipe, invert a plastic pot or tin can about 100 millimetres long and 75 millimetres or so across – an empty baked beans can is ideal. After foraging at night, snails will crawl up the pipe to hide in the tin, making disposal quick and easy.

The next tip I have tried with 100 percent success. Like every gardener I used to have trouble with birds pulling out bean and pea seedlings in the few days after they appeared above the ground. You can cover them with netting, but this is a lot of trouble. An old-timer told me about this simple and inexpensive method that seems to work every time. Just sprinkle some lime along the row a day or so before you expect the seedlings to appear, or even as they break the soil, and the birds won't touch them. I thought the lime might burn the leaves, but, surprisingly, it doesn't appear to affect them.

I hope these tips are helpful to you. Gardening is much more than putting a few seeds in the ground and waiting for them to grow. Little tips like these can make all the difference between success and failure. Good luck.

Moora Moora Revisited

by Sandra Cock, Healesville, Vic.

The infant *Grass Roots* magazine was only a few issues old when one of Australia's first intentional communities took the courageous step of buying land and a historic guesthouse in scenically spectacular country near Healesville, Victoria. In the intervening years both Moora Moora Cooperative and *Grass Roots* have gone from strength to strength, learning, evolving and growing, but still holding the core values that motivated their founders in the early 1970s.

Moora Moora is a cooperative community settled on a beautiful 245-hectare mountain-top property near Healesville, Victoria. The land was bought in 1974 and now about 50 members and their children occupy 24 owner-built homes of earth, timber and recycled materials; all have solar power. Our three major aims are:

- to live cooperatively with those of our choosing, thus giving our children a safe and stimulating environment,
- to live in harmony with nature,
- to integrate education into all aspects of life.

A young woman appeared at a Moora Moora workday last year and tentatively asked whether anyone remembered her mother, Adonna Rudolph. Adonna, with her baby, Jay, had spent some time at Moora Moora over 27 years before, checking to see if it would be part of her future plans. 'Adonna Rudolph', I whooped, instantly recalling images of the warm and energetic young woman with whom I had spent many an hour working, yarning and laughing. I had even, with blessed relief, gladly accepted her offer to wet-nurse my own young baby when a head-splitting virus made breastfeeding beyond me; and I was not normally the sort who could let other people feed my baby. For the next few hours, my conversation with Jay jumped between the two parallel realities of the present and a generation earlier.

Then, only two members lived on the cooperative's 240 hectares, with others arriving from city lives for the weekend. Sustained by our youthful energy and idealism, we constantly discussed, planned, worked and tried to equip ourselves with the skills to build both dwellings and community. I went to work at my 'outside job' for a rest.

Now, the hub of our community's life revolves around both the large original community centre, adjacent to which is our inviting café, and the nearby Octagon, used for events, workshops and some meetings.

When Adonna was staying at Moora Moora, the community centre was home to most members in the process of building. The café metamorphosed from the original equipment shed, to flat, to school building, to recreation

Early days at Moora Moora were marked by constant discussion and planning. Group activities, both social and work related, were a feature of the lifestyle.

space, to café. The Octagon, built by members to be our primary school building, is now used for recreation, childcare, yoga and various other community activities. The dining room in the community centre has been doubled in size to seat us all, and the community centre itself serves us well for meetings, workdays, celebrations and other community gatherings. We also host residential and other workshops for like-minded groups.

When Adonna came to visit, the community centre and the old shearer's house were the only dwellings on our land. Now, our community centre has three housing clusters to its north and three to the south. Each is a hamlet of four to six dwellings. Twenty-four of our planned 30 dwellings have been built, showcasing a large variety of earth constructions. Moora Moora's early decision not to connect with the state's electricity grid has resulted in a significant investment in alternative power systems.

'You must have a look at the row of pine trees', Adonna had instructed Jay, and so we took a stroll in the century-old English garden to do just that. Now, Adonna would also see many creditable individual and cluster vegetable gardens. Two members have planted small areas of cold-climate grape varieties and another a silviculture area of considerable diversity. She would notice now an expanding patchwork of crops in the co-op horticulture area near the barn. She would also see fewer cows than on her earlier stay, as animal husbandry sits alongside the beginnings of farm forestry. She would note plenty of room and opportunity for those interested in animals, agriculture and other complementary forms of land use.

Twenty-seven years ago, most Moora Moora members were Adonna's own age, in the mid to late 20s. As we've grown older and greyer, it has been important to attract new members at a different stage of life, who can bring their own vibrant ideas and energy. Adonna would now see a good number of newish members in their 30s, with a healthy crop of young children. We're always on the lookout for more members and encourage those exploring this commitment to live on the land and experience the community in all its seasons before making a decision on membership.

Regrettably for us, Adonna decided to take baby Jay back to Vancouver to live. Seeing those pine trees proved to be another call to raise her baby back in her homeland. But Jay is plotting a return visit to Australia and Moora Moora for both of them in the not too distant future; we're all looking forward to it.

Moora Moora welcomes visitors on the first Sunday of each month, from 1 to 4pm. If you are interested in information about membership or in holding a workshop at Moora Moora, please write to: PO Box 214, Healesville 3777.

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MAGMA LAMP RECALL

Magma lamp model 1408 (with floating fish inside it) has been recalled for safety reasons. It does not comply with electrical safety requirements and could, in some circumstances, cause an electric shock. The lamp was sold through Homeart stores as SKU 1408 from December 2001 till mid January 2003. Anyone who purchased one of these lamps should immediately return it to their closest Homeart store for a refund.

For enquiries ph: 1300-728-811.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable Population Australia is holding an Internet conference that began in February and continues until October. A different theme each month explores ideas on issues affecting Australia's long-term sustainability. Papers are invited. Cost of registration is $50 for the full nine months or $10 per month. In November a face-to-face conference in Canberra will review all the material covered.

More information can be found at: www.isosconference.org.au

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GR0603

WHAT'S ON

Plenty to do and see at this time of year, such as the terrific activities listed here. Don't forget that 5 June is World Environment Day so why not start winter well by taking time out to help the world by planting a native tree or starting a worm farm.

SUSTAINABLE RENOVATION SEMINARS

A series of seminars 'Sustainable Houses: Renovating Your Home' will be held in capital cities this month. They will feature tips and advice on how to incorporate sustainable features such as solar and greywater into any renovation project. Featured speakers will be architect Andreas Sederof and design professional Chris Reardon, author of the website www.yourhome.gov.au. Seminars will be held in Brisbane on 26 May, Sydney on 27 and 28 May, Canberra on 29 May, Melbourne 2 and 3 June, Adelaide 4 June and Perth 5 June. Cost of each seminar is $27.50; call 02-9241-2955 for details.

PUT THE WIND UP

The Australian Wind Energy Conference is on 24 to 25 July 2003. This is the place to discuss approvals, installations and manufacturing, meet key players in the emerging industry and build important networks. Students welcome. Phone 03-9663-2323 to register interest.

WILD AND WOOLLY

Feeling sheepish? This show attracts over 2000 livestock entries. The Australian Sheep and Wool Show is being held at Bendigo showgrounds from 18 to 20 July. In its 121st year, it features 28 different breeds of sheep, goats and alpacas; elite Merino ram sales; a national fleece competition; and judging of the supreme Australian long-wool exhibit and British breeds group. Feature sheep breed this year is Texels. There will be woolcraft competitions and displays, fashion parades, over 150 commercial stallholder sites, shearing and wool handling competitions and junior judging competitions. On at Prince of Wales Showgrounds, Holmes Rd, Bendigo, Vic. Visit the helpful website: www.sheepshow.com for more details.

NATURAL FARMING SEMINAR

If you want to cure expensive disease outbreaks naturally, avoid health problems before they occur and learn about caring for your land organically, then farm management consultant Pat Coleby is lecturing on Sunday 15 June at CB Alexander Ag College, Tocal Road, Paterson. Cost is $35 including organic lunch. Call Hunter Valley Biodynamic Group, 02-4938-5308.

AWAKEN A NEW YOU

Australia's largest New Age event, the Mind, Body and Spirit Festival, is being held in Brisbane from 23 to 25 May and Melbourne from 6 to 9 June. There will be an array of lectures, workshops, performances, demonstrations and exhibitors, on subjects as diverse as organic cooking and psychic readings. Tickets are $13 – $14. For more information call 1300-651-933, or visit www.mbsfestival.com.au

ORGANIC GARDENING COURSE

Increase your self-sufficiency and learn the basics of organic gardening from A – Z at Josef Bloom's course at the Earthcare Centre, Hawkesbury, NSW. Everything from soil husbandry to preparing the site, different garden forms, sowing and harvesting and pest management is covered. Courses on 14 June, 15 June and 12 July. $25 a session, call Josef on 02-4587-8806 to book.

NSW ECO HOMES TOUR

Tour the nonconventional eco homes in the lovely Manning Valley and Great Lakes areas on the Mid North Coast of NSW on the Queen's Birthday weekend. The two-day self-drive tour takes in over 20 homes, including mudbrick, strawbale, stone, recycled timber, wattle and daub and more. There are also some biodynamic and organic gardens and farms on the circuit. Home owners will be around to answer questions and there will be food and refreshments. For more information contact Lisa, 02-9990-0091.

SOILS AIN'T SOILS

Pro-Ag will train farmers in the use of soil analyses and organic principles as effective tools for sustainable farming, enabling them to set benchmarks and meet the quality and production parameters required by export markets. Registration is necessary two weeks prior to workshops so soil samples can be processed. Workshops last three days, day one covering analysis of the production system, day two how to develop production plans, and day three sustainable farming. Workshop dates: 2 to 4 June at Riverland, SA, 14 to 16 July in south-east SA/Vic, and Tassie in August. For information, contact Linda at APAL, 08-8332-0199, or visit www.apal.com.au

DON'T FORGET MUDGEE

Mudgee Small Farms Field Day is on 18 and 19 July. The event is distinguished by its emphasis on education. There will be over 400 lectures and demonstrations over the two days and the final timetable will be included in the official Mudgee Small Farm Field Days program published by *The Land* newspaper on 10 July 2003. The site is located on the north side of the township of Mudgee on the Cassilis Road. Gates open at 8:30am and close at 5:00pm. Contact AREC 02-6372-3899, or email: jpolak@arec.com.au

BRISBANE PERMACULTURE

The Permaculture Design Institute will present the 2003 Brisbane Permaculture Exhibition at Davies Park, West End, from 9am to 5pm on 13 August. The exhibition will feature trade exhibitors, guest speakers covering the latest hot topics, an organic farmers' market, plenty of displays and demonstrations and some state of the art permaculture design strategies. Admission is $14, children 12 and under free. For further details contact the PDI on 07-3846-4131.

Some Fowl Truths

by Jude Aquilina, Cudlee Creek, SA.

Any *Gallus gallus* addict will tell you that fowls are as good for the soul as they are for the garden. Their therapeutic value is immeasurable. If you haven't mixed with chooks, then you're missing out on interesting, anti-stress company. Humans need to feel wanted, and you know you're loved when it's meal time and the chortling gang run, waddle and flap to your feet.

The *Gallus gallus*, or jungle fowl, is native to Asia and the Pacific and is the ancestor of all domestic varieties. The fowl's natural habitat is forests and jungle floors where it passes its time foraging. My chickens bob along like little sewing machines, stitching with their beaks an invisible seam around the yard. I have 10 breeds of chickens, a pair of geese and a drake. They all have distinct personalities. They roam around together in our backyard and sleep in their chook motel at night (more about that later).

The smallest in the gang are the Jilly sisters, two miniature English Game bantam hens, and guess who rule the roost? The Jilly sisters. Their eggs are like marbles, but they earn their keep attacking free-loading crows and keeping order in the coop.

Pompea, the white Silky bantam, is constantly being cuddled by the kids. She is very easy to catch, which could be because of her enormous pompom 'hairdo'. Soft as any cat, she spends her sheltered life dressed in bridal pantaloons. We have entered her in various children's pet shows. A little purple food colouring and a studded elastic collar totally transform her.

My Rhode Island Red hens, Rita and Rhoda, supply large brown eggs almost every day. They are also the boldest and quickest at feed time, running in and out of the ring of wheat like rugby players.

When it comes to producing nutritious fertiliser, chickens are the experts. Their droppings are rich in nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus. This is a powerful blend and can burn plants if applied neat. Some people like to add water: 1 part manure to 10 parts water. I prefer to take the wheelbarrow into their motel rooms every few weeks and take out the straw and dung, then dump it on a garden bed as fertilised mulch. Just water it in and watch those plants grow!

Gournod the gander in 'honking mode', guarding his partner from stray posties.

Free-range chickens are easy to look after. Just let them roam, feed them morning and early evening and lock the cage at night. When you crack a freshly laid egg and see the yolk, orange as a Jaffa, you know that this is what an egg should look like, unlike the pale battery hen eggs. Free-range chickens are generally clean and healthy with feathers that shine.

Dust-bathing is an essential ritual. My Ancona rooster, Borodin, will call the girls to a dry patch under the tea tree bush. They will each scratch out a body-sized hole and have a group wallow for a good hour. They fluff and flap their feathers, roll over and perform all sorts of acrobatics. Don't stand too close when the bath is over. They all stand and give almighty shakes as dust clouds billow.

Who needs to go to town for traditional theatre when you can have vaudeville at your back door? I often have to stop what I'm doing to watch their antics. Roosters are particularly

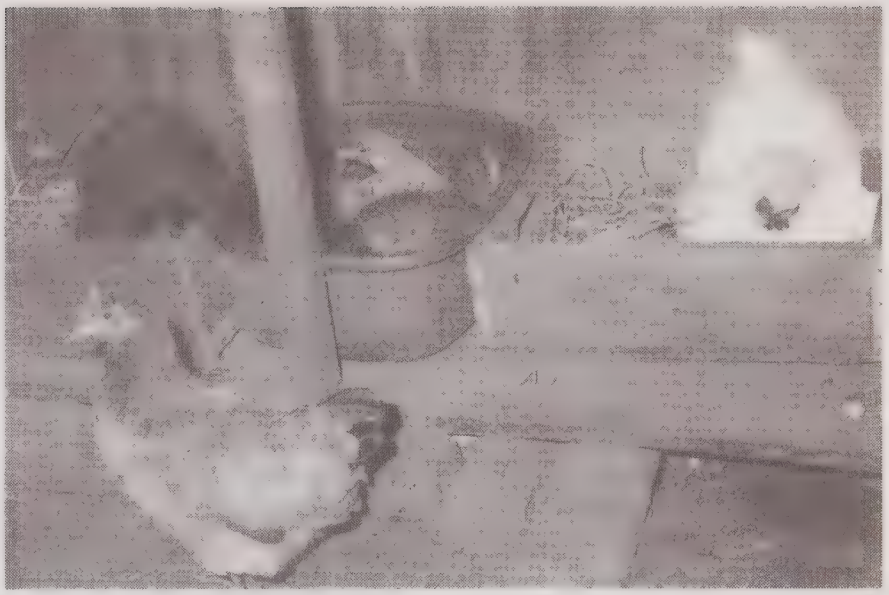
entertaining. When a hen lets out the 'I've laid an egg' cackle, Borodin comes running, clucking, his long red wattles swinging from side to side. He is also a crafty Casanova.

If you're impressed by the quirky characters in a chook circus, then you'll love the goose troupe. Geese are intelligent, can live for up to 50 years and make great 'watchdogs'. Not even the most macho postman will brave the gate in springtime, when my Embden gander, Gournod, is guarding his beloved. However, geese are mostly bluff. Like emus, they will obediently retreat if you wave your arm and outstretched finger over their heads. They think that you are a bigger bird and meekly back off, honking. In fact geese honk rather a lot, so you need to have their sleeping quarters well away from the house.

Remember the geese that saved Rome? Geese have extraordinary hearing and are often seen turning their heads and listening. Mine can tell my car engine and are already honking my welcome as I pull into the driveway.

So, how do geese earn their place on the farm, apart from their good looks and personalities? They mow the grass better and more cheaply than any motorised equipment. Two geese keep our lawn like a golf course.

Geese are fussy about their grooming and need fresh water to dunk their heads and wash their feathers. A baby's bath or child's pool is sufficient. Mine dance a surreal version of 'Swan Lake' as they splash and dive in a pink plastic shell. They are mainly vegetarian and need a good supply of grass. They also lay a clutch of about twelve eggs in early spring. The eggs are large and delicious. One goose egg equals up to seven chicken eggs. Getting them is a test of courage!



Inside the chook motel with Sophie, Helen, Fanny and Pompea.

And why only a drake? Well he's not the most cuddly or clean bird. In fact, he is a green spray painter. He likes to dabble, which sounds cute but actually means that he digs holes with his beak all around the water containers and, at the same time, fouls the water with mud. His name is Cardinal Crester because he has a crown of white feathers similar to a Pope's headdress. And how does he earn his daily bread? He systematically eradicates all snails. On wet days his crop bulges. This spring we plan to buy a duck and release him from celibacy (and acquire a pressure hose for the paving!).

What about their motel, you ask? Well it was built as an act of love by half a dozen family members shortly after the old coop was fox invaded. We had a weekend of mesh and wine, hammering and singing, and everyone camped overnight.

The new coop consists of an inner lockable and weatherproof cage and a large mesh run. It is positioned under a walnut tree for shade. There are permapine perches (to discourage mites) and a row of nest boxes made from old kitchen drawers and lawn mower catchers. The chooks, geese and duck all share this accommodation and get along well. They act as a mobile garbage disposal unit. Geese love watermelon. Chickens love cheese. They all love leftover spaghetti worms. Every scrap is recycled.

There are chooks for all sized yards. In a suburban block Silkies and Old English Game bantams are ideal. Although neither lays very large eggs, they are less inclined to make noise or scratch up the garden. Large breeds like to dig and can make your yard look like the moon.

So, here you have some fowl truths, and I hope you will admit that the benefits outweigh the disadvantages. Domesticated birds, or poultry, are as essential to me as friends and chocolate. Without them life would not be so full, nor so sweet.

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SAVE THE KOALA MONTH

July is save the koala month and the Australian Koala Foundation is asking for support from the public in raising money. Newsagents and some other retailers will have packs of two koala 'tattoos' for sale for $2.

For more details about how you can help save the koala ph: 07-3229-7233, or email: akf@savethekoala.com

Second Time Around

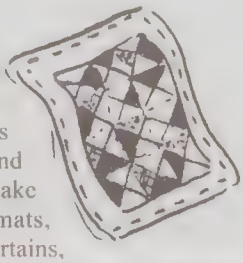
by Deirdre Swanson, Hillbank, SA.

***Grass Roots* readers are skilled at making do, but give them something old and unused and they take recycling to an art form.**

Recycling appeals to different people for different reasons. There are those who care about the environment and want to do their bit to reduce landfill and not become part of a throw-away society. There are other people who cannot afford to buy new items for the house whenever they want. And there is also that group of people (yes, you know who you are) who can't bear to throw anything away. You never know when that headless Barbie doll or broken toaster will come in handy. Whichever categories you fall into, here are some ideas that I hope will inspire you to put some of those treasures to good use.

AROUND THE HOUSE

Old Clothes



Donate old garments to animal shelters, or cut them into squares and try your hand at patchwork. Make quilted placemats, table runners, curtains, cushions and rugs. Fleecy material from tops and track pants makes good blankets. They're easy to sew and don't fray. Old baby clothes can be turned into sentimental quilts or wall hangings that make great gifts for an eighteenth birthday, wedding or new baby.

Pantyhose

Fill the toe of old pantyhose with a handful of porridge oats. Tie with a knot and put under the tap when filling a bath. Squeeze out into the water. The milky liquid is soothing and moisturising and a wonderful treatment for eczema or sunburn.

Drawers

Recycle unwanted drawers into useful under-the-bed storage boxes. Paint and then fix castors onto the bottom.

Jugs and Coffee Pots

Good utensil holders can be made from cracked jugs or coffee pots.

Napkins

Sew two napkins together and fill to make cushions. They are cheaper than buying cushion covers.

Two-Handed Pot Holders

A useful device for holding remote controls, sewing gear or books is made by simply placing a two-handed pot holder over the arm of your chair.

China or Glass Bowls

Fill old bowls with homemade potpourri for an environmentally friendly air freshener.

Tea Towels

Fold a tea towel in half, insert wadding and you have a cheap placemat.

Tea Cups, Egg Cups and Terracotta Pots

Many small, unwanted containers can be turned into original candles. Fill with paraffin wax and add a wick.

Sheets or Calico

Cheap curtains can be made from sheets or calico. Add decorative loops on top and fringing for the bottom, or stencil a design on with fabric paint.

Doors

An old door can make a large and useful desk. Place it on a pair of trestle legs or two card tables.

Metal Vegetable Racks

These old-fashioned racks make ideal towel storage units for the bathroom.

Pan Stands

Grandma's old saucepan stand can be used as a corner shelf unit.

Outdoor Plant Stands

Revitalise an old plant stand by repainting and topping with a pine off-cut to make a small table.

IN THE GARDEN

Hanging Baskets

Great hanging baskets can be made from colanders or wire bicycle baskets. The latter can be slipped over the top edge of a fence.

Plastic Resealable Containers

A variety of food containers can be used for seed raising. Remember to add some drainage holes.

Broken Garden Tools

Long-handled tools can be propped up like a wigwam for a climber to grow up. Also try a star dropper or broomstick topped with an old bicycle wheel or wire hanging basket.

Bedheads

Use an old bedhead, wooden, chrome or cast iron, for the back of a garden bench. Add a seat and two legs for the front. These can also be painted and used as a decorative plant trellis.

MORE WHEELIE WONDERS

New Development

by Ken Frost, Albion Park Rail, NSW.

This is my version of the 'Wheelie Good Compost Bin' described in GRs 139 and 150. I bought the Sulu bin from the recycling section of the local council tip after reading the article showing the Mark 2 model in GR 150. The one part of the article that I thought needed improvement was the lid. I didn't like the suggested method of using a brick to hold the lid onto the new top of the upended bin so this is the way I solved the problem.

I first cut off as closely as possible to the top of the bin the plastic 'ears' that held the long handle as a hinge to the lid, and I cut the handle in half. With the bin upended, I cut the axle shaft of the wheels, not being able to find any other way of removing it, and discarded it. The holes where the shaft had been had to be enlarged slightly, by filing, to allow the two halves of the handle to go through. These were then joined together again, by glue, and a small plastic rod removed from the ends of the handle. The lid was then attached by means of one large screw each to the cut-off 'ears'.

Because the lid was so much bigger than the new top of the bin, I cut a section out of it in the middle, as shown on the photos, such that the two halves of the lid could be overlapped and held together. I used bifurcated rivets, but pop rivets or metal screws could also be used. Finally, I covered the cut with silicon sealant. Because the recesses of the handle interfered with the closing of the shortened lid, I had to modify the new top on which it sits, as shown in the photos. An ordinary hand-operated wood rasp soon did the job.

I placed the ventilation pipe in the front corner, as shown, so that it will be out of the way of the shovel when I empty the compost. A ridge on what is now the cover helps locate it in the hole, therefore I used only two self-tapping screws to hold it, slots in the lower edge of the cover also helping to hold it in position. As described in the original article, the cover was cut from the old base of the wheelie bin which had to be removed.

I hope that Graham Watkins likes my model of his design.

Top right: The composter displaying the shortened lid.

Centre: Close-up showing the handlebar of the lid where the wheels were previously positioned.

Below: Note the ventilation pipe in the far right-hand corner and the reshaping of the body to fit the inside of the lid.

PAPER MAKING BY HAND
Becoming Creative

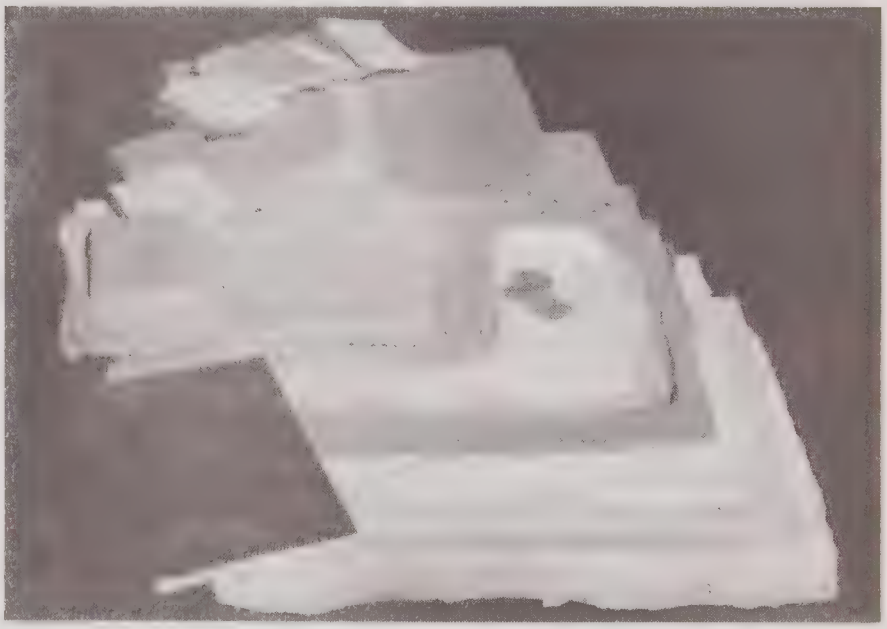
by Sue Southwood, Balmoral Village, NSW.

In my last article, I wrote about the joys of making that first sheet of handmade paper. Mine was as thick as cardboard and as rough and absorbent as kitchen towel. I mixed up all sorts of paper, had too much pulp in the vat, and used kitchen wipes for couching on, leaving an unpleasant texture. But it was an awe-inspiring experience and I still have it. It is a joy to me to see someone else get a kick out of their first piece of handmade paper.

After a few sessions at the vat, you begin to learn from your mistakes. All those library books are inspiring, but nobody has the sort of time (or patience) needed to follow the directions! So you go ahead, and you fail, you win, and you learn. I started making paper about eight years ago and have been addicted ever since. I teach other people, kids as young as three, people from all backgrounds and ages, men and women, artists and people who reckon they haven't a creative bone in their body.

After awhile, your technique will improve; you might find a different way of coordinating the process which suits you, and that is fine. You might even have made the perfect sheet first time round. Still, there comes a time when you get the urge to be a little more creative. You want to add bits and pieces to the vat, change the colour or texture, add perfume, or experiment with the quality of your paper. This is where a journal comes in handy. Keeping notes of all things done in the name of paper making has helped me greatly, as has the habit of keeping labelled samples. This is good for remembering just how I got that terrific result with whatever pulp it was. I urge you to do so as well.

First of all, take a look at the paper you are recycling. Is it worth the effort? Can it be recycled in another way? The finished paper is only as good as the quality of the original waste paper. Most paper can give a decent result, given its original use, but some are better than others. Laser printing paper, computer paper, cartridge and some better quality magazines give good pulp. Avoid using heavily printed papers, unless you like heavily speckled paper. Also, unless you prefer a uniform grey or sludge brown, it is better to keep to one colour family at least, such as green and blue; yellow, red and orange; pink and purple. These can all be added to white to get some wonderful tints. Anything with acrylic paint or other plastic surface won't pulp well, nor will any wax-surfaced paper. Most other drawing media, inks and watercolour can easily be blended into the pulp, with some surprising results.



A variety of colours and textures using coffee, tea, natural dyes and water paints, plant fibres and embossed surfaces.

There are many ways of adding colour. Dense colours really should begin with a densely coloured paper because most colours will dry lighter when added to white pulp. There are special colours available from papermaking outlets, but try any water-based paint, including acrylic, mixed with water, then blend in with the pulp. Bits of coloured paper, half-blended and added to a base colour, give an exciting result, as does adding confetti. Try blending a soaked paper serviette of a strong colour – this gives surprising results. Fabric dyes, some food dyes, and dyes made from plants can all yield great results.

For textural treats, try adding flowers and leaves (dried) or small feathers, sawdust, coffee grounds, tea leaves, tiny bits of frayed fabric or threads, or a small amount of pulp produced from plant fibre. (Some weeds make great fibre, such as blady grass, agapanthus, pampas grass.) Boil plant material before adding it to the pulp.

Try dipping your mould into one

Newly made pulp awaiting its fate – some textured cloth etc to give an interesting surface.

coloured pulp on one end and another on the other end. Or use a small embroidery hoop with netting to make a different shape to couch onto your paper, using a different colour.

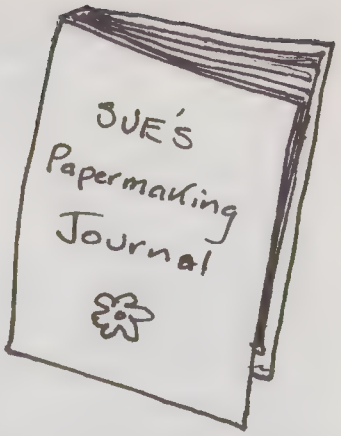
To personalise your paper, add your favourite perfume – just a drop! or some essential oil, talc, or any of the fragrant herbs. Some herbs even keep the silverfish away, such as wormwood, which looks great in dark grey paper.

For a richly embellished surface, start with a piece of lace, or other heavily textured material, placed on your couching cloth. Form paper and press in the usual way. Allow it to dry, spray with size. After drying again, use your paints, crayons, inks, or other media to work up a really great surface, suitable for collage, greeting cards, or even book covers. This also looks lovely with no further embellishment.

To size your paper, making it more easily worked upon with most mediums, make up a solution of gelatine and hot water, and spray or brush it on the surface of your paper, or dip each sheet in it and dry flat. This seems to make it more flexible too. PVA and water, cooked household starch and other size methods can also be used.

To decorate your paper for a special occasion, use the paint/medium of your choice and stencil appropriate motifs onto the surface. Potato cut stamps make a nice touch, or you can work up the surface using stamps, inks and embossing powders. You could make a whole series of Christmas cards to send to your loved ones, even make the envelopes yourself. You can do this easily by using a favourite shaped envelope, opened out and used as a stencil. You can even make a deckle to form your envelopes in the same pulp as your cards. This works well. I have sent cards to England with no mishap, during peak periods!

For a fun summertime project, and only if there is plenty of water, use the wading pool and a few smallish flyscreens to make your own wrapping paper. Get the kids busy with the mallets though, because it takes heaps of pulp. Fill the pool with water and pulp, stir well, place screen on bottom of pool. Lift slowly out of the water. Allow to drain for five minutes or so. Then stand the screen up against the wall to dry. When dry, insert a thin blade under one edge and gently peel the paper off. If you want to paint on it, size it by spraying with a gelatine solution when almost dry. Allow paper to completely dry before removing it from the screen. Kids love this, as they seem to love all aspects of the papermaking by hand.



Keep notes on all your creative experiments – it will save hours in the future when you forget the little details.

Dispose of water/pulp slurry thoughtfully, it can clog the drain.

Next time, using plant fibres in your paper to create special works of art.

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For more information visit the website at: www.bookmuncher.com.au or phone: 1300-130-997.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Resource NSW is developing a waste management strategy for that state encompassing avoidance, resource recovery and waste disposal. Their aim is to prevent waste where possible and to turn unavoidable 'waste' into valuable raw materials in line with principles of ecologically sustainable development. EcoRecycle has been operating for some years in Victoria with similar aims.

For more information about the activities of these two groups, Resource NSW can be contacted at: 02-8837-6000, and EcoRecycle at: 1800-35-32-33 (Victoria only).

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION
What It's All About

by Rodney Dyke, Crafers, SA.

Organic agriculture is a sustainable philosophy and management system with low risks of environmental degradation. Once we have gained the skills to let nature, and appropriate science and technology, assist us to produce a great product, it is a most satisfying calling. From a commercial perspective it must be productive; however, land must remain productive for future generations. One of the problems with organics is that what we as growers define as organic varies somewhat between us, and may well differ from our buyers' expectations – I have had consumers ringing up looking for an organic farm that does not use animal manures!

Organic certification is all about this sustainable philosophy and organic management. It is also a regulatory and quality assurance (QA) system that gives buyers, often far removed from the farmer, the confidence that the product they purchase complies with public standards that they can access. Organic certification is a contract between you and an Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) Approved Certifying Organisation (ACO).

WHY BECOME CERTIFIED

Should you become certified or not? I have spoken to many certified growers and found that there are several reasons they chose certification.

- They were already farming organically and decided to tap into the price premiums available for certified produce.
- Farmers who had a strong landcare/land stewardship background became attracted to organic certification because of its environmental assessments.
- A few, who had low farm income and some off-farm income, converted (and this appeals to me) because certification, via its trained inspectors, is a feedback system that lets them know how their sustainability practices are working.
- Some who converted had in mind the control of on-farm waste utilisation. They wanted to effectively recycle the nutrients that otherwise can concentrate in some farming systems and cause problems on farm or in waterways.
- A small but significant number converted to organics for purely market premium reasons. However, most I am aware of came to accept the other benefits of organic farming.

BEFORE YOU COMMIT

Before deciding to apply for organic certification, you should investigate the various aspects and consequences of this, as with any ongoing commitment. For starters, for soil-based producers, the National Standard for Organic and Biodynamic Produce requires a minimum three-year lead time from the beginning of the process, to full organic certification. In those three years, the applicant will be in 'precertification' for a minimum of 12 months, followed by two years of 'in conversion'.

Check the costs. Different ACOs have different price structures and you need to investigate what you will be paying from day one. As with all larger purchases, you should try to pin your ACO down to as final a cost as possible

Contented cattle: Organic certification is dependent on a sustainable philosophy and organic management. It also gives buyers quality assurance.

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and be sure that you understand what additional costs could apply once you become certified. Some ACOs have cheaper schemes for groups of small farms – check them out.

You need to be aware of the expectations of the certification system. As with most QA systems, good farm planning and record keeping is important. For some farmers this is a challenge. Your ACO might ask you to do a soil analysis, plant windbreaks/buffer zones or carry out other on-farm works.

Resources on the 'how to' of organic farming can still be hard to find in some cases. Have you considered doing an organic farming course or one of the workshops now regularly being conducted around Australia, some with Farm Biz funding?

A Note of Caution

Just because you produce the world's greatest organic product is no guarantee that buyers will beat a path to your door with offers of high prices. My experience is that some of the best growers haven't done their homework on income, marketing and promotion. You cannot use your ACO's name or logo while in precertification so do not expect price premiums. Even while in conversion, or when fully certified organic, there will be glut periods when you will not get the prices you want.

MARKETING

Organic farmers are embracing new ways of selling their product. There is now a growing list of organic marketing groups, some founded on a regional basis. In addition, organic farmers are enthusiastically embracing the rapidly growing farmers' market movement. Organic farmers are also value adding in various ways, such as food processing on farm, or expanding farm activities to include restaurants, retailing, accommodation and eco-oriented activities like native animal sanctuaries.

IS IT WORTH IT?

The rapidly expanding number of certified farmers, processors and retailers is its own answer. As with all human endeavours, there will always be minor glitches. On the whole though, certified farmers are very positive. I found that those farmers who, in addition to the farming, worked hard to research the facts of certification, built up a good market, networked, formed or joined a marketing group and sold at farmers' markets (that is, those who felt more in control of their systems and sales) were more positive about organic certification.

A healthy organic crop will usually receive premium prices, but research the market before planting.

Approved Certifying Organisations

These were shown on the AQIS website on 23 March 2003. There is another new certifier in Queensland (the Qld DPI), but I understand that they have not yet certified any operators.

Biodynamic Research Institute (BDRI)
Post Office, Powelltown 3797
Ph: 03-5966-7333

Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA)
PO Box 3404, Toowoomba Village Fair 4350
Ph: 07-4639-3299
Email: info@bfa.com.au
Website: www.bfa.com.au

National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA)
PO Box 768, Stirling 5152
Ph: 08-8370-8455
Email: enquiries@nasaa.com.au
Website: www.nasaa.com.au

Organic Herb Growers of Australia (OHGA)
PO Box 6171, Sth Lismore 2480
Ph: 02-6622-0100
Email: ohga@nrg.com.au
Website: www.organicherbs.com

Organic Food Chain (OFC)
PO Box 2390, Toowoomba 4350
Ph: 07-4696-7501
Email: ofc@orbital.com.au

Tasmanian Organic-Dynamic Producers (TOP)
PO Box 434, Mowbray Heights 7248
Ph: 03-6383-4039
Email: chottsy@bigpond.com

Rodney Dyke has completed his Permaculture Design Certificate, undertaken several organic courses and has been, till recently, information officer at NASAA. He is involved with the Organic Federation of Australia National Conference being held in Adelaide in October this year and is Secretary of the Soil Association of South Australia, SA's organic networking association. He is planning a big expansion of his own organic produce. For more information, please email him on brod@senet.com.au and he will answer or forward your query.

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Happy Holidays For Pets

by Eliane Barben, Yeppoon, Qld.

While we are enjoying our holidays are our animals fretting? Natural animal therapist Eliane Barben shares some advice to ensure our pets have a relaxing holiday as well.

Do we realise what our pets go through when we leave them behind? For some animals it is the first time away from their owners, others have been there and done that many times. Some are young, some are old, some are property pets with lots of freedom, others are family house pets allowed to share the couch. All have different characters, from the loud bossy one to the quiet timid one. The food they eat is often different and the feeding times vary. Food is of the highest importance to our companion animals and a great source of pleasure.

DIFFERENT REACTIONS

Every animal copes with being boarded in a different way. Some respond by fretting, being quiet or refusing food for up to three days. Some suffer from diarrhoea caused by the change of food or stress, some from constipation due to lack of exercise. Others suffer from separation anxiety and display behaviours such as throwing themselves against the wall or mesh. In extreme cases they can bite at the mesh. Constant barking can be the result of anxiety or attention seeking. Some dogs take an aggressive/protective stance, howling because they have been left behind. They can be bored, agitated by other animals, or be sick or in pain.

MINIMISING PROBLEMS

There are many ways we can help our animals cope with a period of boarding.

Housing

Look for a facility with solid connecting walls. This can save animals a lot of stress. If they cannot see the other animals there is no need to bark or to behave territorially or aggressively. Solid walls also help prevent contamination being passed between animals. It helps our companion animals if there are not too many kennels. There is less stress on the animals and the caretaker has more time for the exercising, playing and feeding interactions that are so important.

Routine

A daily routine: the same time, every day for exercising is very important. It gives the animal, hope, excitement and pleasure; in short, it has something to

Solid adjoining walls reduce stress by preventing animals from seeing each other.

look forward too. Foods should also be given at the same time every day.

Ask Questions

In maintaining cleanliness and controlling odours what product is used as a disinfectant? What is used for the control of ticks or fleas? Some products can be extremely toxic.

What is the diet? A cat or a dog on an improper diet will not remain healthy. Can you bring your own food? Is the food all prepared in advance?

Is the owner/caretaker flexible? Often just a small extra walk or game will stop barking.

Have a Trial Stay.

If you are going away for a long time, have a trial stay for a weekend before you go and get some feedback from the owner or carer. Remember that three weeks in a kennel is a very long time for a companion animal. If you are happy with the boarding, use the same facility every time you go away to give the animal a chance to bond with the carer.

Communicate Pet Behaviour

If your animal likes playing with water, spilling out the water bowl, the carers need to know, especially in summer when their routine might be to change the water only twice a day. Also tell them if your animal suffers from separation anxiety and gets stressed when you leave it alone at home, or if it likes to chew things. This knowledge will assist the carers and ensure your pet is understood.

OTHER ADVICE

- Treat your pet for ticks, fleas and worms.
- Vaccinate your pet. More and more kennels are accepting pets that have been homoeopathically vaccinated.
- Take your pet's rug, toy or towel to the kennel to give the animal some comfort during the stay away from you.
- Wildflower Relief Elixir from Living Essences of Australia, Emergency Essence from Bush Flower Essences, or the well known Bach's Rescue Remedy are designed to strengthen the mind and keep it calm and destressed. They have no side effects, are not toxic and are extremely helpful for pets that are stressed or unhappy to be left behind. You can give the animal a dose before leaving home and take the bottle to the kennel caretaker. All it needs is a few drops on top of the head to help your pet, repeated after 20 minutes if needed.
- Colloidal silver would also be a great help; a tablespoon daily on your pet's food will not only help with any diarrhoea or constipation, it will keep your pet healthy while you are away. Colloidal silver is a natural antibiotic and perfectly harmless to all parts of the body.
- You can get these products from any health food shop, or talk to your homoeopath/veterinarian regarding any health or behaviour concerns about boarding your companion animal.
- Remember, never ask a person who is afraid of your animal to look after it.
- Always ensure your animal has access to a cool area, especially in summer.

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SOCKS ON THE HEAD?

by Coral Anne, Emerald, Vic.

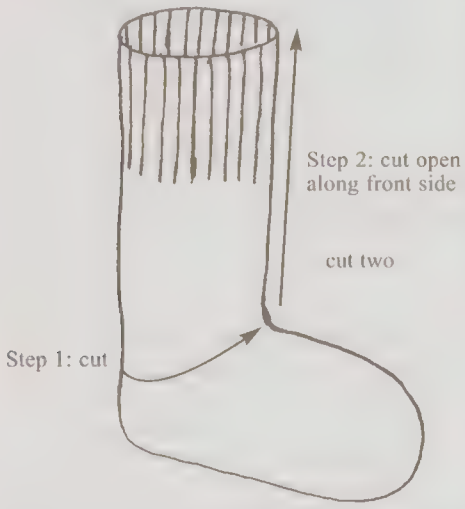
Yes, well of course, if you're a GR reader!

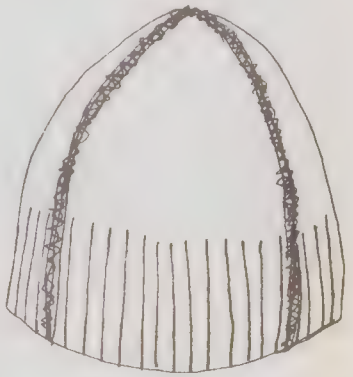
Hurray! At last I have something I would like to share with others. One windy day recently I had the need for a hat that would not blow off. I decided to use an old pair of socks that were already darned and just about ready to throw out. After cutting off the top part of the sock just above the heel, I then cut it from bottom to top and opened the two pieces out flat.

With a crochet hook I stitched around it. Although it was a bit small for me, it kept my hair under control and my head warm. Success! Now all my old worn out socks will get a new lease of life, being worn on my head instead of my feet.

Using two sock pieces makes a hat that fits a child's head perfectly, but three pieces are needed for adult hats. The shape will be fairly similar, but not many of us have multiple pairs of socks of the same colour so be prepared for a colourful hat.

The snazzy sock hat – cheap, simple to make and really warm.





Step 4: Three pieces of sock top are just as easy to join as two. Pin sides together first, easing the curved edges together if one piece is slightly longer than another. Finish by crocheting together or sewing using blanket stitch.

ESCAPE FROM THE CITY

by Beverley Collett

The story of a farm named Tathra
An inspirational, moving, and often funny account of three generations living, learning and working together, farming, building a house, and establishing a fruit winery and restaurant.

Available from: Beverley Collett,
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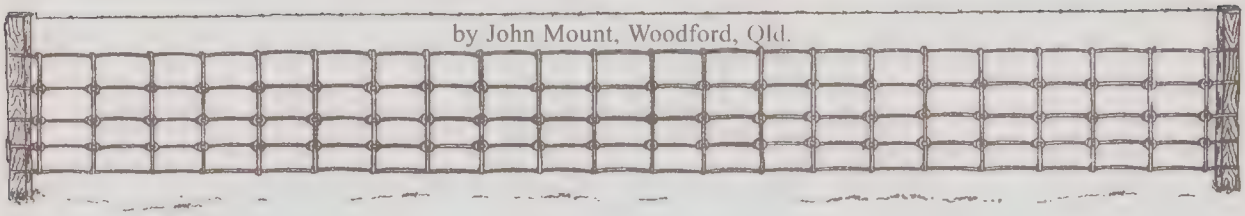
Fencing Matters



by John Mount, Woodford, Qld.

Anyone who has purchased land scattered with small to medium sized rocks has also purchased cheap fencing! Farmers, both in Australia and around the world, have used stones and rocks to build dry stone fences or walls in order to delineate their boundaries, retain stock, clear their land for cultivation, or just to create some tidy living space.

In most cases these stone fences are built on the Newton method, that is, with stones properly selected and positioned so they rely only on gravity for strength; hence the word 'dry', meaning no mortar or concrete, though some people, a little more zealous than others, have used concrete to bind both the stones and their courses together. Stone fences usually range from one to two metres thick at the base and taper to a few centimetres at the top. Mind you, though the fence will still be there after we're all dead and gone and the fencing material is cheap, it's still hard yakka!

Some landowners are fortunate enough to have good fencing timber growing on their property. It's then only a matter of selecting the right timber to use, splitting each log into quarters for the in-between posts and bracing posts, and retaining the straight round logs for the end posts. Nowadays, many environmentally conscious shire councils require you to notify them before you begin chopping down certain species.

For those on a shoestring budget, a good idea is to purchase metal posts or star pickets. These are available in various sizes and types – bare metal, painted or galvanised. These have it over permanent fences in that they can be shifted to new locations without too much hassle. When working with long star pickets it's a good idea to use a wheelbarrow to stand in when sledgehammering them into the ground. Better still, you can purchase or make yourself a special metal hammering pipe blocked at one end and with handles welded to the sides. This makes the job much easier, especially with both feet on the ground.

Whether it's barbed wire, standard galvanised wire, dog wire or whatever, there are usually two main types to choose from: 'hi-tensile' or 'soft-drawn'. Hi-tensile is good for taking heavy loads and can be pulled very taut; its main problem is that it is difficult to work with, being very hard to bend. The soft-drawn is usually cheaper to purchase and easier to work with, but is less likely to stay tight as it tends to stretch.

To pull or stretch a fence there are two main schools: the 'motorised' method or the 'Armstrong' technique. The motorised method uses tractors, trucks and cars for pulling power, while the Armstrong technique employs the 'arms', albeit assisted with rope pulleys, hand winches or levers.

Once the fence is up you can't just forget about it! Every few weeks it pays to ride or walk around the total length of the fence and check it thoroughly. There's always something to repair: removing white ant nests, retensioning sections of the fence that have stretched, repairing sections that have been damaged by animals (wild and domestic), removing the occasional fallen tree branch, and cutting and removing small shrubs and trees growing up through the fence. If the ground is extra moist in places, the posts will sometimes move, and during a drought the soil will shrink, making the post holes larger and again causing the posts to move.

Apart from being a good opportunity to observe nature in all her guises, the fence patrol offers the rare opportunity for a chat with a neighbour who just happens to be working the land or doing a fence inspection of their own.

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THE TASSIE DASH
Time To Buy

by Sherrian O'Connor, Spreyton, Tas.

Last issue we shared Sherrian's lively description of preparing the family home for sale, now she tells us about the highs and lows of buying in Tasmania.

You know all those do's and don'ts for buying a house? I think we've broken most of them! How come? Well, during the process of selling our house in Victoria (see GR 156) we'd been looking at Tasmanian houses on the Internet. One house, a Federation on a bit of land, looked nice but was well above our price range. After a while it dropped in price. Hmmm. Still too much. Never mind. It disappeared from the listings. Oh well, must have sold. Some months later, while using slightly different search parameters, up came 'the house'. Ah, it was at last affordable, what next? We called the agents. 'What's the story?' 'Some interest but no contract as yet.' 'What's around it, the abattoir?' 'No (laugh), a stone cottage, farmland across the way . . .'

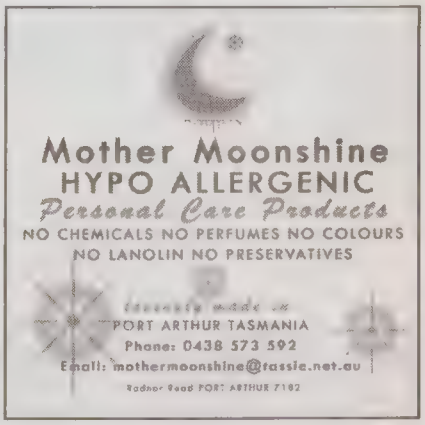
Oh help, it was a heck of a lot of money to get over there if it wasn't the right house. Much debate, much thought, then, almost simultaneously, we decided – let's do it, we'll go. Off to the travel agent to book our van and sit-up seats on the ferry. We were to sail Wednesday night, return Saturday (this was the original Spirit, sailing alternate nights). We booked an on-site cabin for the two nights in Devonport, made an appointment to view 'the house' and another possible one, contacted the area's Jenman-style agent (see GR 156) and arranged to see any suitable properties they had, asked their advice regarding solicitors (on the grounds they are meant to be ethical agents), and made an appointment with suggested solicitor. We were busy!

With things arranged at work and home, and bags packed, we headed for the ferry. All quite exciting. Some twelve hours later we were not so excited, just exhausted. Sitting up is not to be recommended if you can avoid it!

Sherrian and Brian felt an immediate affinity for their new home in Spreyton, Tasmania.

Back on land, we settled into our cabin then headed off for 'the viewing'. Right, well, no one had mentioned the freeway at the bottom of the garden had they? Just the sort of thing we were trying to get away from. The grounds were great, with old fruit trees, bulbs, a brilliant sleep-out, but we stood and looked and listened – no, no way. Gloom descended. The second property was no good either. It was cute and beautifully presented, but much too small for us. Then we retreated for some lunch.

There were crossed wires regarding our next appointment, which was delayed till the next day. We toured the other agents in town. Although we had sold our Melbourne home and had a settlement date, no one was interested



– 'Look us up on the net', was one response! Hey, we thought, we may not be high fashion dressers but we are clean, and cash buyers! More gloom as our tiredness increased. Could anything be salvaged from the day? Yes, the solicitor was terrific; we were really comfortable with him. Phew, not all despair. Next for food and some sleep.

The following morning we were at the Jenman agent for our revised appointment and met with a very different reception; representative Chris was both courteous and enthusiastic. We were soon off to view a house he felt might suit (Jenman agents really try to match buyer to property). He was right! Suddenly all changed. The moment Chris showed us the place we knew – this was meant. This was it. So many resonances, such a feel of 'home'. 'Gorgeous', mouthed Brian as we met in the back bedroom. It was impossible not to be enthusiastic. Back at the office, rather than being pushy, Chris suggested giving us time to think about it. We retired to our cabin for lunch and talk. There was no big discussion, we both knew this was the one. We returned to Chris's office, reminded him of the Jenman pyramid, and made our offer. Had we jumped on floorboards, run taps, knocked on walls? Nope. Did we flush loos, peer under carpets? Again, nope. But we did make it subject to a full building inspection and took the contract to our solicitor before signing. We felt unbelievable relief when our offer was accepted and arranged to view the house again the next morning to do some measuring. Then we felt justified in treating ourselves to a Chinese meal before showers and sleep.

Our last morning we packed the van and met Chris to pay the deposit and go back to the house. The owners came out to meet us – even more resonances. Cups of tea and exchanges of information followed, not much measuring was done as time got away. Hugs on departure and we were off for last-minute chores before catching the ferry. Two rather shell-shocked people made it back to Melbourne and fell into bed for awhile before starting to spread the word around the family. We'd done it – we'd found our Tassie home. Not the one we went to see, but the one that was waiting for us. Some things are meant to be.

CROSSING THE STRAIT

Having now done a crossing on one of the new Spirit of Tasmanias as day passengers (ie no cabin or allocated seat), we offer the following suggestions:

- Wear comfortable, layered clothing.
- Take a small pillow or cushion.
- Take a couple of rugs (polar fleece is light and warm).
- Take a book, crosswords, sketchpad – whatever, it's a long trip!
- Take a packed lunch or snack box.

Take two rugs, one for the chair to prevent draughts round your back, the other to keep your knees warm. Some smart people took thermos flasks – good move. The 'cafeteria- style dining' is a set price affair and snacks and hot drinks are available at the various bars, but all can prove costly over a day's sail. Pokies, films and video clips are on offer, but didn't really suit us, and inside was crowded and a tad muggy. A passenger fare is not the most comfortable way to travel, but does make it more affordable and, if well prepared, is bearable.

EASY OIL CHANGING

When doing an oil change on a vehicle, an old piece of flyscreen material draped over the oil catchpan will strain out any rubbish and retain the sump plug so you don't have to grope around in the catchpan for it.

Drain the catchpan contents into an empty container clearly marked 'Used oil'. It can now be used as a general lubricant for keeping rust away on tools, oiling hinges etc.

Mixed 50/50 with creosote it will keep termites away from fence posts and timber poles and is a preservative as well. Oil is not cheap and recycling it cuts your general maintenance costs.

Roberino,
Arrawarra Beach, NSW.

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Tassie Tips

by Laurel Dunphey, West Launceston, Tas.

Sometimes Feedback letters generate an astounding response. The topic of a potential move to Tasmania has always interested GR readers. Little did Laurel Dunphey realise, however, that her letter of advice in GR 155 would attract hundreds of requests for more.

I have decided, after the huge influx of letters and phone calls that I received, that I had better write again to fill in some gaps for those people I couldn't get too. Sorry, I stopped replying after I reached 50 and there must have been at least another 150 I didn't get to! I thought there might be a few out there looking to move to Tassie, but this response left me totally gobsmacked!

COMMON QUESTIONS

• What is the rainfall? In the Launceston area you are looking at from 800 – 1000 millimetres per annum.

• Who are the best real estate agents? For rural properties try Roberts Real Estate, but there are LJ Hooker, M & M Real Estate, Elders Real Estate, Bushby Real Estate and many others. Check out the Internet, or ask your newsagent to get in copies of the *Examiner*, the *Advocate* or the *Mercury*.

• What about public transport? This is only available in and around the larger areas such as Launceston, Hobart, Devonport and Burnie. There are no train routes as such!

• Hospitals and schools? There is a good selection in all major towns, as above. Likewise, we have some very good government and private schools. Also Steiner schools if that is what you are looking for.

• Shopping prices? These are slightly dearer than the mainland.

• Petrol price? At the time of writing it was 104.5, unleaded.

• Cheap properties? Yes, but you have to search long and hard, or go to one of the old mining towns like Zeehan, to find them. You can get them from about $70,000 in most towns, but the way the market is moving upwards at a phenomenal rate at the moment they are not lasting long. Do your homework, buy the local property guides, ask questions, do your homework. Don't believe everything you hear.

• To the dear old Scottish lady who phoned from WA: yes, we do speak and write English, you don't need a passport to come here, and yes we do use the good old Aussie dollar (what were you thinking?).

• Most of the towns have craft markets either monthly or bimonthly and they always accept new stallholders. I think it's about $20 to get a table.

HOMEWORK

Please let me give some advice to those who are coming down without doing their homework. This is a very big step and should not be undertaken lightly. I had no unbreakable ties when I moved down here. Remember that we are an island. It costs, at cheapest rates, about $159 to fly to Melbourne and about the same by sea. To bring a container of furniture will set you back close to $4000.

Look into the areas where you want to buy and don't just buy because the price suits your budget. Don't let an agent sell you into an area on price alone. Rent in the area for a while until you are sure that it is exactly where you want to be. Ask around and find out for yourself why the prices are so cheap.

To those people looking to be self-sufficient: If you haven't at least grown your own vegies in your suburban backyard, don't think it's as easy as throwing in a few seeds and watching them grow. We have possums down here in all suburbs, and they just love to root through the gardens after you've spent hard hours slaving away planting things. Add to that wallabies, wombats, civets, devils, and a wide assortment of other native animals that like to dig, chew and otherwise destroy your hard work.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not backpedalling or trying to talk anyone out of moving to Tassie. I know you will love the experience, but what I am suggesting is that you remove the blinkers, get some perspective on the situation and take it one step at a time.

I've been living here for almost 15 years, and loved every minute of it. I love the peace and quiet, the unobtrusive neighbours, the slow pace, and wouldn't move back to the mainland for quids. But your kids may well hate it. It is a black hole as far as jobs go for kids, unless they are prepared to go out and actively search for work. Jobs are there, but so is the competition to get them. It's not like it was when we were kids, where it was assumed that you could just go out and get a job with no problems.

For those seeking rural properties, do a search on the Internet via the area you want to live in and ask questions from those sites on line.

I take this opportunity to wish you all well in your ventures and your prospective move and apologise for not being able to reply in person to so many of you.

See GRs 89 and 90 for a wide-ranging series of articles about Tasmania.

Wines From Citrus Fruits

by John Walters, Albany, WA.

I know it is a bit of trivia, but did you know that oranges, lemons, limes and grapefruit are berries? Oranges originated in north-east India and China, and limes and lemons in India. The word orange is in itself interesting. When oranges were introduced into Spain (Valencia and Seville) the English sailors who took oranges home to England could not pronounce the Spanish word for orange – *NaranJe*. The 'J' sounds like the 'ch' in loch. They called them *naranges*, so it does not take much imagination to see where the word orange came from.

The grapefruit has its origins in the West Indies. Mandarins, tangerines and tangelos are not oranges really because they belong to a different species of fruit. Regardless of origin, these citrus fruits make a lovely, clean, clear wine which, if one has the patience to leave it to stand for two years, is superb.

I advise you to ignore recipes that start 'take six', or whatever number, of the fruit you are using. You cannot judge the juice or pulp content this way. Look for recipes that give the amounts.

SWEET ORANGE WINE

1 lt orange juice
250 g sultanas
700 g white sugar
1 tsp pectolase
1 tsp yeast nutrient
1 sachet Gervin no 3 yeast
boiled water to 4.5 lt

Using very juicy oranges, squeeze the juice out and put it into your container, together with some grated rind from one orange. Wash the sultanas in hot water, chop very finely and add them, together with the pectinol and yeast nutrient, to the must.

Pour on the boiling water, stir well and allow to cool to room temperature before adding the previously prepared yeast. Leave to stand for four days, stirring daily, then transfer to flagons under airlock, after straining well through fine muslin. Allow to ferment out and rack when necessary.

This wine should be tested from time to time during the first few weeks for sweetness. Sugar can be added, about 60 grams a time, till the desired sweetness is reached, but always keep under airlock after adding the sugar in case the wine starts to ferment again.

For more wine making articles see GRs 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 108, 119, 120, 122, 124.

apples, bananas, cherries, dandelion, endive, figs, herbs, hummus, soyabeans, tea, soap, macadamias, garlic, chillies, lemon grass, pasta, cauliflowers, roses, broccoli, peas, rocket, lettuce, bokchoy, avocados, tomatoes, herbal extracts, massage oils, potatoes, carrots, cheese, jams, sauces, eggs, honey and more .....

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If you have queries on any type of livestock send them in and we'll get our panel of experts to research the problem for you. Post them to Livestock Advice Page, Grass Roots, PO Box 117, SEYMOUR 3661.

MAIL ORDER HELP

I've always felt so useless when one of my chooks has fallen ill. Though I find lots of help in my GR back copies, I've also discovered a contact that might appeal to readers. I joined the Veta Club for $22 and this gives me access to speaking with a veterinarian, plus a discount on some products. I can get worm treatments and soluble antibiotics by mail from this supplier. When you live out of town this is a great help. If you want to know more write to: Veta Farm, 3 Bye St, Wagga Wagga 2650, or if you're computer literate try their website: www.vetafarm.com.au

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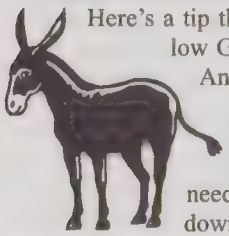
CARE WITH LICE TREATMENT



Here's a tip that might help fellow GR animal keepers. An aged donkey on our place became ill recently and we thought we might need to have her put down. In the end, her period of dejection, inappetite and profuse thirst passed – much to our puzzlement. We think she reacted badly to a dusting with Pestene for lice control and talks with our vet confirmed this. Older animals need a gentler treatment and next time we'll try sulphur powder on its own.

Gwenda & Reg Gibson, KATOOMBA 2780.

DISEASE INFORMATION

I was quite moved by a letter on this page a few issues ago discussing the loss of a pet sheep to leptospirosis. It was with interest I read a concise and most informative description of this disease in the library recently, from *Australian Farm Journal*, August 2002. Any readers concerned about leptospirosis should try and get a copy of this. It is largely associated with cattle because they are a natural host for the main strain of it. Bacteria are the infectious agents and they can survive for long periods when conditions are ideal – hot, wet and when yards and paddocks are waterlogged. Love the magazine.

Cate Stephens, NORTH RICHMOND 2754.

SCOURS TREATMENT

My family has used this natural way of preventing or treating scours in baby farm animals for several generations now. We use nutmeg in the first few bottles or buckets of milk, and this potentially fatal problem doesn't occur. Use ½ teaspoon in a bottle for lambs and 1 teaspoon in the bucket for calves. Hope this helps Linda Phillips who enquired about a solution for scouring calves back in GR 119.

Jill Woods, MILTON 2538.

STICKFAST FLEAS

Found a good way to get rid of stickfast fleas — garlic in the drinking water (lots of it). I used it and some personal insect repellent (Pea Beau Bite Free) when nothing else would work. Tried vaseline etc to no avail. Have heard cypress sawdust on the chook house floor stops infestations, but haven't tried it yet. White ants won't eat cypress so it might have something to do with that.

Karen Long, MILES 4415.

KEEP CATS?

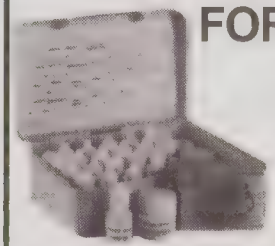
You need *The Healthy Cat* book. See page 82 for order details.

Poultry Breeders

We're looking for purebred breeders of the different poultry species to list in our next edition of the *Poultry Breeders Directory*.

Send a stamped SAE for an entry form to: Poultry Directory, PO Box 117, Seymour 3661.

ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES FOR ANIMALS



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ECO NEWS

SOLAR THERMAL ENERGY

A kilometre-tall tower (to be the world's highest structure) about to be constructed in the desert of south-west NSW will use hot air, collected in 7500 hectares of surrounding greenhouse, to drive turbines that will generate electricity. Expected to be in operation by 2005, and with four more on-line by 2010, the tower will generate enough electricity to supply 200,000 households. By the end of the decade the company behind the scheme, EnviroMission Limited, expects to be providing renewable energy to over a million households. A smaller pilot plant operated successfully in Spain for a number of years in the 1980s.

RAMSAR SITES

The Ramsar Convention is an international treaty for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. Four new Australian sites were added to the Ramsar List in October 2002, bringing the total number of Australian sites to 63 covering an area in excess of 7.2 million hectares. The new sites are: Ashmore Reef National Nature Reserve, Coral Sea Reserves, Elizabeth and Middleton Reefs Marine National Nature Reserve, and The Dales on Christmas Island.

Ramsar sites are given special protection under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, having been identified as one of six matters of national environmental significance. They are protected against any action that has, will have, or is likely to have a significant impact on their ecological character.

More information about Ramsar sites can be found at: www.ea.gov.au/water/wetlands/ramsar/index.html

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION

The Friends of the Porongorup Range in WA are raising funds to buy a property of 511 hectares in order to conserve the 400 hectares of diverse vegetation still remaining on the site. It is unusual, if not unique, for a single community group to undertake such a challenging task. With the help of the Commonwealth under the National Reserves Scheme, and generous public support, the group is now three-quarters of the way to achieving their goal and expects to come to a private agreement with the current owners in April 2003. Following the transfer of ownership the group will have the new challenge of maintaining the complex biodiversity of the property while encouraging community participation. The site is expected to attract wildflower enthusiasts and birdwatchers and be a focus for environmental education.

Anyone wishing to make a donation, visit the site or find out more can phone Ann Burchell on 08-9853-1153.

BUTTERFLY ACTION PLAN

In February this year Environment Australia released its Butterfly Action Plan to assist butterfly conservation. Authors of the plan, Dr Tim New from Latrobe University and Dr Don Sands of CSIRO Entomology, list 125 taxa as of conservation interest in Australia and 26 as threatened at national or state level. Butterflies are an important indicator of the health of an ecosystem; where they are under threat it is likely that other invertebrates in the ecosystem will also be struggling. Habitat disturbance, invasive plants, and human activities such as forestry and commercial and residential development have caused a steady decline in butterfly numbers and put many populations under threat. Because of natural variation in populations from year to year, assessing threats to butterflies poses unique challenges for entomologists. This plan is a valuable resource that will provide a framework for the conservation and management of butterflies and also will help in assessing change in the broader environment.

WATERWATCH SUCCESS

When local Waterwatch volunteers found the aquatic health of Sheepstation Creek in Ayr, North Queensland, to be compromised, local landowners and the Burdekin Shire Council decided joint action was called for. Natural Heritage Trust funding of $110,000 over three years enabled Conservation Volunteers Australia to undertake monitoring of the waterway and a community education role. The monitoring program showed that aquatic weeds were the cause of low dissolved oxygen readings and poor water health. Further funding from the Rangeland to Reef initiative enabled a trial of a water weed harvester to be carried out. Water quality returned to normal very quickly once the weed was removed from the test site and fish stocks, water bugs and bird habitat improved. Weeds were subsequently cleared from other stretches of local waterways and streamside revegetation was carried out. The success of this program can now be used as a model for other problem areas.

ALTERNATIVE WASTE PLANT

Australia's largest alternative waste disposal plant has recently opened at Canning Vale in WA and is accepting waste from over a quarter of Perth residents. The plant will be processing household garbage from the region's 360,000 residents into high-quality compost. It is expected to process about 350 tonnes per day and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill by 80 percent.

For more information contact Michael Samaras on 02-9552-4499, or 0413-101-533.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Grass Roots,

I am looking for a cook book, circa 1919, called **'KOOKABURRA COOK BOOK'**. My mother had a copy and I know of another lady who has a copy. This is an excellent cook book and I am prepared to pay a good price for a copy.

Mr G B Leighton,
'Grove Closed',
226 Fullarton Rd, EASTWOOD 5063.

Dear GR Family,

I would like to thank a fellow GR family member for their generous gift of the number one issue I had been looking for. This quite unexpected package turned up on my doorstep after Christmas. I do trust that this gentleman's gift will create for him positive energies and the favour will be returned to him in some way a thousand-fold. My sincere thanks to Colin and GR, you are both helping to keep the energy of sharing and caring alive. A second parcel arrived today with more of the early publications I have been seeking, all from this same generous person.

I am seeking a 1989 publication **'COMMON KNOWLEDGE: THE IRISHNESS OF EVERYDAY THINGS'**, by Olive Sharkey, McPhee Gribble. If anyone has an old copy they would like to sell me I am happy to pay postage also.

It's always good to take the opportunity to write into our beloved GR, any excuse will do. This time I am looking for information. I am certain someone will have the details I am wanting. In GR Feb/Mar 2003 on page 8, Lin Foley mentions a **MANUAL STAINLESS STEEL JUICER**. Would anyone know where one of these juicers could be purchased from? Perhaps somewhere other manual-type utilities are available also. Is there a mail order catalogue of similar items?

I am also seeking a book or information, if available, on varieties of (1) perfumed or scented trees, shrubs and plants, (2) fire retardant trees and shrubs. I have recently found a great nursery to purchase herbs/plants from either by mail order or direct: All Rare Herbs, PO Box 91, Mapleton, Qld 4560. There are some of the very old-fashioned plants available that I remember from my childhood and have not seen or heard of for many years. I can only say that all the plants, trees and shrubs available in their catalogue makes me absolutely want them. Oh well, one can dream. Thank you again for all who contribute in any way to our wonderful GR.

Michele Maher,
13/12 Angel St, EIGHT MILE PLAINS 4113.

In Victoria the CFA (Country Fire Authority) can supply lists of fire-retardant species. Try the relevant fire authority in your state.

Dear GR,

Alas, our draught horse driving school had to be cancelled late last year over public liability concerns. Seems insurance companies are upping the cost of coverage, putting many of our courageous draught horse drivers into a difficult situation. We are still eager to learn; can anyone help us out?

Would be interested to make contact with anyone who has lived in British Columbia, Canada. Looking for back-to-basic ideas in dealing with a snowy winter climate.

RENTING CAN HAVE ITS BENEFITS. We now rent a large farmhouse on a vegetable/beef farm. This way we are able to learn about living in the country and enjoy the lifestyle without being in debt. The teenagers are getting ample employment on local farms.

Louisa Danen,
MS 172, ALLORA 4362.

The Editors,

After reading a letter in your Feedback section of GR 154 by David Murphy, I felt I should write a brief response to some of the points he has raised. Firstly, although I am not an expert on vermiculture, in fact I know very little about it, I am a qualified microbiologist with many years experience in the food industry and I would like to talk about some of the comments he made regarding **PATHOGENIC MICRO-ORGANISMS**.

Firstly, David is implying that pathogens are anaerobic only, and that they proliferate in this sort of environment. Unfortunately, this is far from the truth. Most bacteria can survive both anaerobic and aerobic conditions, but most of them prefer, and do best in, aerobic conditions; *Bacillus anthracis* is a good example. (*Clostridium botulinum* is an exception, it loves anaerobic conditions, and this is why it is a problem in canning and bottling.) Even if you did manage to maintain a high level of oxygen within the vermiculture, there is still a chance of breeding pathogens.

Some of the pathogens David mentioned are found naturally in soils, *Bacillus*, *Clostridium*, *Legionella* and *Tuberculosis* are all typical soil microbes. A great source to find *Clostridium tetani* is in horse manure. Finding them in a liquid that has come from a soil source is no real surprise or anything to be alarmed about. This is why you should wash all vegetables before eating them, even ones treated with a 'safe' vermicast solution.

Taenia saginta and *Trichinilla spiralis* are parasites that you get from eating undercooked meats, not from the soil, water, or eating vegetables. If you found these in the manure leachate, I would have to ask just what are you feeding the worms? I also wouldn't expect to find *Salmonella* or *Entamoeba histolytical*. Unfortunately, space restrictions limit me from giving a detailed explanation of every pathogen David listed.

I would certainly not argue with David about raising and using worms, but some of the implications of his letter, unintentionally I am sure, could lead many people to believe that anything aerobic must be safe from pathogens, that anything anaerobic is dangerous, that naturally grown foods are safe and David's vermicast solution is free from pathogens.

At the end of the day, there are micro-organisms around us all the time and we need not be frightened of them, but rather conscious of their presence. Apply a little common sense and practise safe food-handling techniques. This way we can live happily and reduce our risk of harm from these bugs.

If anyone has any questions about bacteria or other micro-organisms, pathogenic or not, then please write into the Feedback section of this magazine and I will answer them for you.

Paul Bawden,
GLENMORE PARK.

Dear GR,

I have a small property (36 acres) in the Murray Mallee, approximately 20 kilometres from Mannum, which is on the River Murray. In the last 12 months total rainfall has been less than 75 mm. At present I have three horses and two ponies and a small herd of dairy goats consisting of four adult Toggenburg does, two doe kids (orphans) and a recently acquired buck. I also have a Saanen and a Saanen cross who between them produce nine litres of milk a day.

I also have two Australian Melaan, a young buck and doe goatling. From this mating I am hoping to get some section B kids. These goats are black with orange-yellow eyes.

Thanks for a great magazine. I have been getting it for approximately 10 years and it has been a great help when I have been having some character building moments.

Cherylynn Smith,
RSD 621A, MANNUM 5238.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Grass Roots Readers,

There were two letters in the Feedback pages of GR 154 that I found particularly interesting. They mentioned the subject of **FIBRE-RICH FOODS** and the problems relating to an overload of **CANDIDA** in the body. While I do not suffer from the latter, thankfully, I am fully aware that certain foods do cause an overload of candida, such as yeast for example. However, as with Carol Canton, I also found that my hormones 'were out the window and that my digestion couldn't cope'.

The cause of my particular complaint was not candida, but a simple case of being overweight! As with Carol, I also went on a very strict cleansing diet, having joined our local fitness centre as well in a conscious effort to lose the excess weight.

My cleansing diet also included the wonderful discovery of LSA: linseed, sunflower and almond mix, which Irene Turnley mentioned in her letter. However, I will point out that although the LSA mix can still be taken regularly, the strict cleansing diet itself should really only be undertaken on a short-term basis, as the body still relies on the necessary intake of certain dairy foods, such as yogurt and milk, to prevent the onset of osteoporosis. After having been on the cleansing diet for about six weeks my body began to show the obvious symptoms of a lack of calcium in my bones, and in particular my legs. As soon as I stopped with the cleansing diet, and began drinking milk again, the symptoms ceased.

I am no longer on any special diet, whether it be for body cleansing, weight loss, or even the prevention of candida. I am simply cutting out certain food groups that I don't need, such as bread, biscuits, chocolates and yeast. I'm also cutting down on other things, such as coffee, tea and sugar. In the past twelve months, since being on this short-term cleansing diet, I have not only managed to successfully cleanse my body and restabilise my hormones, but I have also successfully managed to shed the excess weight that had caused both my hormones and energy levels to become so erratic and unbalanced in the first place. And boy do I feel so much better now for having done that! Thank goodness for the natural way to cleanse the body, not to mention the natural (or should I say, good old-fashioned) physical workout at a local gym.

Heather Golding,
126 Cliff Barrons Rd, UPPER ORMEAU 4208.

Dear GR Readers,

We live on 40 acres with **EVERY SINGLE SPECIES OF ANT** in existence – except the dreaded fire ant. Initially we used to fuss over them, try to stop them in the house, fill in their nests, and in return they would bite.

Now we leave them to their own devices and try to live in harmony with them. The only bite now is when one gets caught under the thong strap and it is biting as it dies. Try it, it might work for you too.

B G & D E Woodstock,
'Phoenix Rising', Lot 3 Aural Vale Rd,
NORTH DEEP CREEK 4570.

Dear GRs,

I think there is a need for research to be done into cures (especially for blood diseases) from nature; maybe there are healing properties to be found in mushrooms and toadstools, who knows? Government-funded research never seems to be adequately funded, or to have the right priorities. I have a dream of a privately funded **RESEARCH CENTRE** to investigate these matters.

I used to live on a large sheep and crop farm (now up for sale) that would make a great base for a research centre. It's big enough to hold a hundred researchers. There could be animals and food gardens for self-sufficiency. It's even big enough to put a house for the handicapped on. (I have a handicapped son in foster care in England.) The handi-house would care for the kids whose problems are too severe for their parents to cope with. Governments are closing places and there's nowhere for the kids to go. Parents are feeling guilty because they can't cope, some are great, but others, like me, can't handle it. I could handle other people's children, but not mine. A house of refuge would be great, with all facilities to stimulate the children and cater for visiting family members. I'm full of ideas. Please respond.

Kazlee O'Casey,
77 Frederick St, URANA 2645.

Hi Megg & Mary,

I can help with the answers to a couple of the questions asked in GR 155. For Jane and Guy Bevan, regarding **RECYCLING WINE BOTTLES**. Some may stand recycling, others will not. Most use fresh glass as they are easy to bottle and you know they haven't been used for anything else. Manufacturer and supplier ph: 03-9587-5311, or 03-9480-3222. Website: www.cospak.com.au or www.plasdene.com.au

For Bob McAllister regarding **TEA AND TOBACCO**: to process these for home use is rather expensive and will finish costing you more than the product already manufactured.

For Sharon Jolic about **BREWING APPLE CIDER**: Home Brewers can supply your needs and it has a wide range of books on brewing subjects. You can write to: Australian Home Brewers, 103 Poath Road, Hughesdale Victoria, ph: 03-9568-7796, or www.brewcraft.com.au

For Samantha George regarding **RESTLESS LEGS**: Restless leg syndrome can be treated with a natural product available in chemists around Australia called Crampeze. It comes in 30-tablet packets or 60-tablet packets. It contains B12 and B6 plus magnesium. I have used it for the same reason and found it excellent.

Colin J Law,
Email: colinjlaw@yahoo.com.au

Greetings GR Folk,

I'm writing in the hope that someone might be able to help me with **INFO ON AN AGA STOVE**. We found it at the local dump, would you believe! It is a Everhot Deluxe, and has a gas attachment. It seems to be in exceptionally good condition. At the moment I have an ordinary run-of-the-mill, Metters-type wood stove, which works very well, but is wood hungry. I was thinking about replacing it with the Aga, but will need to remove bricks to make it fit in my fireplace. Seeing as it's rather a large job I want to make sure it is the right decision before we do it.

Anyone who has used a stove like this, I would love to hear from you. How much wood does it use? How well does it heat the home? How well does it cook? There seems to be a gaping hole in the firebox where the gas comes in; could there be a piece missing? Perhaps a grate of some type? When used on gas, how much does it cost to run? Hoping to get info before the coming winter.

Allie,
PO Box 446, BARMERA 5345.
Email: teela001@hotmail.com

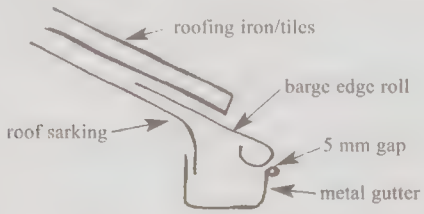
Contributors and correspondents who want letters or articles returned are requested to include correct postage.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GRs,

The recent bushfires have destroyed many homes and pinpointed the weak points in traditionally built houses. Burning embers and sparks can be wind blown many kilometres and if they are able to ignite something that is combustible, then much grief is possible. Leaves in gutters are a hazard, so are any gaps in the walls and roof, and plastic flyscreens just melt; metal ones last a bit longer. Closed windows are the go.

I have a **LEAF DIVERTER ON MY GUTTERS**, which is the addition of a Zincalume barge edge roll, a standard roofing accessory.



The way this works is that rainwater clings to the curved edge roll and goes into the gutter, but any leaves keep on going over the edge. Also, in a tropical downpour excessive water keeps going over the edge because of inertia. This stops any flooding of the gutter leading to water entering the walls of the house.

Roof sarking by means of aluminium sheet insulation is a **GOOD INSURANCE AGAINST SPARKS** getting to the roof timbers. Metal wall and roof framing is another safeguard and saves trees being chopped down. Concrete slab-on-ground floors prevent sparks starting a fire under the floor. Continuing the concrete floor at least two metres out from the house provides a buffer zone to protect the house from fire and is a great outdoor recreational area. Roof ridge irrigation fittings, which can spray water completely over the roof and beyond, are a further safeguard. All this may seem unnecessary until your house is burned down.

With winter just around the corner and many people **MOVING TO TASMANIA**, I remember that on especially cold days my grandmother would shake cayenne pepper into our shoes. She would say that it brought the blood to the surface. I don't know about that, but it certainly warmed our feet. I think you should take care about it getting into your eyes, so don't touch them until you've thoroughly washed your hands.

Many people these days suffer the complaint of **SORE WRISTS**, numbness or pins and needles in their thumb and forefinger caused by repetitive movements on their computer keyboard. The median nerve in the wrist gets compressed by swollen tendons, which are inflamed by overuse with the wrists bent. A wrist support like a door draft excluder (snake) or a small pillow-like device as a wrist rest can help this condition and also relieve some shoulder stress.

Rotating the wrists six times a day for about five minutes can help and vitamin B6 supplements also help, usually about 100 mg per day, but let your doctor know first what you are contemplating doing. He may also prescribe a course of anti-inflammatory pills, but ask the chemist for a printout of any side effects because some warn that you shouldn't drive a car while taking them. Some pain killers and antihistamines have the same caution, so don't ignore road safety. By law you are entitled to a printout free of charge and it allows you to monitor your health and wellbeing.

Sucking a small, smooth, clean pebble was the American Indians' quick fix for a **DRY MOUTH** or a sore throat if no water was immediately at hand. It starts the saliva flowing and lubricates a dry or sore throat. I keep a couple of small pebbles wrapped in a tissue on hot days if I'm maybe going to be where there aren't a lot of shops to buy spring water. They are easier to lug around than a bottle of water. I'll select some smooth pebbles and boil them up in readiness for use. I don't just pick up any old stone, goodness only knows its history.

If your particular eccentricity happens to be **LIVING IN THE TROPICS**, a few tricks I learned while living north of Townsville could be of some practical help to you.

Insects come in humungous and uncontrollable quantities, so of course do their predators such as snakes, spiders, geckos. You get the picture? In the meantime, the temperature is hot and humid and tropical itch is not completely unknown. This happens to be tinea, or something so similar it doesn't matter, in all those personal parts of you that get a little moist. So get some **PRANTAL POWDER** before you scratch yourself to death.

House design is of critical importance so that you don't just . . . well, melt! Roof design is important because that is what cops all the heat. White coloured roofs reflect all the infrared rays so that it's cooler, and all the ultraviolet rays, so that we don't get melanomas. Roof ventilators in the form of ridge or peak ventilators work extremely well in summer and winter. Trouble is that you will become acclimatised eventually and walk around in big jumpers and ski jackets in the 'winter'. You have to have a damper to block off the roof ventilators in winter. Ropes and pulleys usually do the trick to control the damper. Cross-ventilation is of prime importance and so is insect screening. A heavy RHS (rectangular hollow section) steel frame on a concrete slab or a built-up mound of earth fill is a good solution, with many sliding glass doors to let the breezes do the cross-ventilation for you.

A wide, covered verandah all around is the sensible protector for the house and on the outside of the verandah many yellow fluorescent light tubes will illuminate the verandah and house through the glass sliding doors, but attract the insects outside. A nice desexed Burmese cat will stay around the house to keep you company at all times and present a neat line of snakes at the front door for your inspection in the morning. Mine also ate any spider it saw. Yum! Cockroaches too! Sure saved on cat food.

Shade is very important to keep cool, so shade trees take on a special importance. I had a huge mango tree on a property I was caretaking and if I had been able to keep the fruit bats from it I would now be a millionaire. Big shame.

Roberino,
PO Box 359, WOOLGOOLGA 2456.

Hi Megg & Gang,

I am just starting to collect material for a queen-size **PATCHWORK QUILT** and wonder if anyone has any old material (especially tie-dyed or beaded) that they would like to send me, before they throw it out. After years of seeing the result of many beautiful quilts being made, I decided I should make one for myself. They look gorgeous when finished and can be handed down as time passes. Any suggestions on making a quilt would be very much appreciated. All letters will be answered and I can help with postage if required. I have arthritis and fibromyalgia, also cervical spondylosis and I am in constant pain, so I figured I should make the quilt while I still can and it would also take my mind off feeling useless.

If anyone has any suggestions on the above please feel free to drop me a line. I'm only 44, but at times I feel 100, and I'm sure I'm not alone.

For my quilt, I am thinking of putting beads around the edges, so if anyone has unusual or 'hippy' beads lying around, maybe I could use them. Maybe I could trade with a recipe or two?

Any suggestions at all on the above would be appreciated.

Skye,
49 Isabella St, SHEPPARTON 3630.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Megg & Mary,

We have been fans of *Grass Roots* for many years. Until recently, though, we have had to work out our frustrations on suburban blocks, trying to at least be partially self-sufficient. Now at last we have been able to move to the next step. Recently we bought 120 acres of bushland at Hampton, NSW, on the western edge of the Blue Mountains. We're currently building a tyre and rammed earth home, which we plan to be as self-sufficient as we can make it, and a bigger garden than ever is evolving. However, from time to time we get tired, and, although reading GR is always refreshing, we would love to be able to visit other projects and talk to other people trying to live similar lifestyles. The events we often see advertised in the magazine look terrific . . . but they are nearly all in Victoria! **ARE THERE NO EQUIVALENT EVENTS IN NSW**? That's hard to believe.

This brings us to the point of this letter. The magazine has always struck me as having a decidedly Victorian flavour. We recently went back through a number of recent issues and found that the articles and letters are actually fairly evenly distributed, so it's read by people from across Australia. But Victoria is particularly favoured in terms of advertising, workshops and events. We just begin to salivate over a service, event or product advertised, only to find out that it is not available anywhere near us.

Obviously, we can't have everything organised at Hampton, nice as that might be, but we would like to send out a call to readers in NSW to see if other people feel the same. Perhaps we are just not looking in the right places for events, or perhaps they are simply not happening in NSW. If the latter is the case, what can we do about that?

Perhaps it is just us – we are pretty busy, and maybe we are not listening well enough. Please tell us what we are missing! There was an event held at Kangaroo Valley a few years go that we did go to and enjoyed, but this does not appear to have been repeated and we are wondering why? We regularly go to the Mudgee Small Farms Field Days and enjoy it, but find it becoming a bit mainstream agriculture. There are many aspects of self-sufficiency and sustainable living that are not covered at this event.

So all you Grassrooters in our broad locality, are you interested in exploring the potential for some face-to-face and hands-on workshops or events? If so, any suggestions or expressions of interest would be greatly appreciated. Looking forward to hearing from someone out there.

We just obtained our latest copy of *Grass Roots* and are somewhat disappointed in the article on **BUILDING HOUSES USING CAR TYRES**. We ourselves are building with used car tyres and mud, so have first-hand practical experience.

Our first problem concerns Roberino's comments about dealing with councils and their regulations. It does not reflect the actual experience we encountered in getting council approval for our building, nor that of a friend who built in a different council area. There are in existence entirely satisfactory sets of engineering specs for this method of building that are quite respectable enough for the two councils we know to have passed them to date in Australia, and perhaps there are more. In our case the council was very supportive, even sending their building inspector to a workshop to learn more about the method. We don't want to erect dangerous buildings any more than the council wants dangerous buildings to be erected and we found our talks with council reps were both constructive and helpful. I know it's the done thing to sling off at councils, and often they deserve it, but not in this case. We are afraid people will be put off exploring the potential for this building method by Roberino's prediction of council frustration, and that would be a shame.

The explanation for the building methods involved in the article certainly indicates that the author has neither seen nor been personally involved in this type of building. Neither of the houses we know about to date has involved the use of a Kanga hammer. We use a wet earth-cement mixture to fill, followed by dry earth, and ram with an ice-cream-container-sized concrete block on a stick. We think using a Kanga hammer all the way around would actually be detrimental to the building because about a third of the wall fill is unconfined outside the tyres. You'd lose most of what you put in down the sides. Roberino is also mistaken in stating that a council would require a minimum layer over the outside of the tyres. Neither council placed that stipulation on either house. As with all forms of building muddies, there is a range of possibilities for the final render and a variety of ways to waterproof and dust proof the surface. The finish required will be dictated to a certain extent by the content of the soils being used.

If we had read this article as newcomers to the idea, we would certainly have second thoughts about using it, and feel that Roberino's treatment of it was made more in the light of finding another use for recycled tyres than of a well-researched evaluation of a cheap, ecologically sound, and creatively satisfying building method. It would be unfortunate if people were deterred from trying this method by misinformation from people who have not been involved in using it.

David & Suzanne Alder,
21 Bourne St, WENTWORTH FALLS 2782.

We are not consciously favouring Victorian events Suzanne and David, perhaps it's just that these are the ones we're sent information about. We'd love to receive information about self-sufficiency-related happenings in all states, but rely on our readers to let us know relevant details well in advance of the event.

Readers can learn more about David and Susan's tyre house in a future issue of GR.

Dear GR,

Thanks Megg and gang for a great magazine. Thank you to all the people who write articles and provide me with the motivation to create a list of what I should do around the garden (it hasn't progressed beyond a list yet, but one day . . .).

For those of you who know the small country town of Tooborac (in Central Victoria), you will know the beauty of the large granite boulders that dot the countryside. Instead of watching clouds (there haven't been many of those around for a while!), we watch boulders. There is one that we can see from our window that looks like a face at Easter Island! My wife and I are wanting to utilise a small amount of these rocks, somehow, to tie our home in with its surroundings. The first plan we had was to **PAVE A SMALL AREA** near our barbecue with some **FLAT GRANITE**. The only problem is, we have absolutely no idea how to do this! How do we shape the rocks? How do we bond them together? Will they crack and break? If anyone has any experience with this kind of thing, could you please let me know your experiences and give us some advice? Thank you in advance to anyone who has some suggestions!

Stephen Schwer,
RMB 340 Baynton Rd, TOOBORAC 3522.

Please keep letters brief, clearly written and relevant to self-sufficiency topics. Letters pushing barrows (religious, political or other) will not be published.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Grass Roots,

Thank you for your wonderful mag. It's hard to wait for each issue to enjoy the knowledge. While living in suburbia, I have been able to create a small (7 x 7 m) **PERMACULTURE FOOD FOREST** out front of my house. It is now three years old and a joy to behold. I invite any nearby 'Grassrooters' to come and have a look. I'll explain how anyone can do something similar at very little cost. My house is in a quiet street and my aim is to be able to leave produce on my front kerbing for the healthy walkers to take and enjoy.

I'd like to know if anyone can direct me to any recent book, publication, etc so that I might learn how to read food labels of goods from a supermarket.

John P Sierakowski,
34 Horizon Ave, ASHMORE 4214.
Ph: 07-5539-1226.

Try 'The Chemical Maze', a guide to food additives and cosmetic ingredients. It's available for $10.95, plus postage, from the author: Bill Statham, PO Box 789, Ringwood 3134. Ph: 0402-234-954, 0419-507-594.

Dear Grass Roots,

Hello all, I'm a longtime reader, first-time writer. I won't gush about the great mag, suffice to say, it's the only magazine I buy on a regular basis. It was my dad who started my GR journey, although he never got to live the dream. Dad died of cancer mid 2001, after a (too short) lifetime in the public service. I'm so glad he held on to see my fourth (and last!) child born. It's been a hard time for us, with my grandad passing six months later, my father-in-law (cancer again) leaving us two months after that. Team that with a custody battle and the usual stress of surviving in the city – well sometimes it all gets a bit much, you know? But life goes on and with three boys to keep me running, I can't just give up. We have to live, we have to move forward, we have to buy land! Problem? We haven't done this before! And so I write, **SEEKING ANSWERS** from the wise GR family spread around this great land.

Here are the questions. Has anyone built the Iron Age way, frames of woven branches (thinking of using bamboo) covered with a mud slurry and a thatched roof? Anyone got a sod roof happening? We plan to build many small huts rather than a big house – any ideas on placement, feng shui, etc? Different water storage ideas? We plan to have a series of small concrete tanks, underground, similar to Arab desert well systems. Fed from a creek, all connected by pipe (seeping hoses for crops), with a larger tank being the shower wall of our bathroom.

We would love to hear your outdoor oven story – recipes would be good, too! And is it possible to incorporate a water heater in a mudbrick oven?

Is there anyone who has used resin in their earth floor? Anyone who was involved in building the Darwin airstrips during the war? Anyone who can tell me how to build a tipi (or recommend a good book)? Also there's the animals. I'm thinking sheep – for milk and meat. We are going to breed dogs (maximum four bitches) and I thought to breed rabbits – to keep the dogs in meat. Sorry to bunny lovers. I worry though – what if some escaped? Also, is it legal to breed kangaroos? We like it as much as the dogs do. What about enclosures and feed? How do I keep snakes out of the chook dome? Duck versus chook? And is there anywhere with a minimum of spiders – my only real fear?

And, that all said, is there anyone out there willing to offer us a go? Would like some experience before we dive off the deep end. Willing to consider all offers. Perhaps you would like to get more done each day, but need someone to get the kids through their lessons and play, housework, gardening etc. Need a caretaker? Have some spare land begging for attention: I'll try anything once – well, almost anything!

I know this letter is terribly long, but one more request I have. I would like to get in touch with any mothers who have lost children to ex-partners, after years of sole custody without incident. I always thought you had to do something wrong to have your child taken from you. Our legal system has me astounded. And almost broke! Thanks for listening, you fantastic people. Go well, stay well, and peace to all.

Melanie Mobers,
PO Box 206, KARAMA 0812.

Dear GR Staff,

I would like to comment on some matters mentioned in GR 154. **RESORCINOL**, suggested as an ingredient in fly papers, is toxic by inhalation. It is particularly dangerous to asthmatics and allergy sufferers. **'BICARB'** in the baking soda recipe is bicarbonate of soda. It contains sodium and is the chemical used in most commercial baking powers, along with tartaric acid or citric acid and phosphate compounds. **CHLORINE** from swimming pools and vehicle exhausts, particularly diesel, is beginning to affect the ozone layer.

AUSTRALIAN SUBURBS could certainly produce all the fruit, vegetables, nuts and legumes required to support most of the population. This would greatly reduce the amount of land required for agriculture. Revegetation of the remainder would improve air quality, reduce salinity and secure a future for plant and animal species, including humans. I suspect the land saved would simply be seen as space to be filled with more people. I recently heard a comment from an economist that it would be better to replace agricultural land with cities as they use much less water and generate more wealth. He did not mention the pollution, or suggest what we could eat. This demonstrated to me just how divorced the average Australian has become from the source of our real needs. Most people seem to think food, water and clean air are optional and environmentally expensive luxury items are essential.

Jim Brass,
15 Patricia St, KARALEE, IPSWICH 4306.

Hello Fellow Gardeners,

I am an **ORGANIC BERRY AND FRUIT TREE FARMER**. I collect currant and bramble berry varieties as a sort of arboretum, before they all disappear!

I live in a beautiful valley in Tasmania's Great Western Tiers at Jackey's Marsh – rainforest, mountains, cliffs, crystal clear streams. All my bushland is under a conservation covenant, soon to be a private nature reserve! I live alone, but I am a very sociable person and I enjoy having a rave about anything. It's all about sharing ideas. So, I'd like to invite anyone who would like to camp for a bit here (or there is a beautiful little octagon you can stay in) to do so. I don't want any money nor work-in-kind. You do what you like during the day (within reason of course!). There are lots of bushwalks and waterfalls about. I love music – classical to house, ska to jazz. There is a piano and harmonica here. I have a huge dance music collection (used to be a DJ), so a bush rave is fine, but please – no drugs!

I also intend driving my little one-litre Tonka truck up north to Cairns this 'winter', so if there is anyone who would like a visit, I'm happy to oblige. I'm good at building, electrics, plumbing, I'm a botanist (plant ecologist), pianist and pipe organist – so you can show me that disused dusty old pipe organ that exists in your local church, and I'll try to put some life back into it with a bit of Bach.

If you are interested in visiting or being visited, I'd love to hear from you.

John Robin,
C/- Post Office, MEANDER 7304.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Hi Megg & Co,

GR 155 is very newsy and enjoyable as usual, lots of questions answered and lots asked. Now I've a question for all those Einsteins out there.

What is the botanical name of the tree of heaven, and can this tree be used in any way to deter rabbits from eating and digging around fruit, native and olive trees? This curly question was asked of me in a letter recently and I have no idea. I think about 20 years ago someone wrote in GR that you could make a concoction using quassia chips, but how now escapes me.

There have been requests for information on how to **MAKE ESSENTIAL OILS**. I have seen people make their own equipment to extract these oils in small quantities using nothing more elaborate than an old pressure cooker, bought at a garage sale for $5. The method was simply to attach a stainless steel pipe to the pressure weight's outlet on the lid and let the pipe drip condensate into a container and bingo, you have an essential oil. I haven't seen these people for some time now, so they may have blown themselves up, so be warned. Also the pressure cookers were made of aluminium and you know what they say about aluminium cooking vessels – Alzheimer's disease! So maybe these people have just forgotten me.

For Jan and Guy, regarding their questions in GR 155. You will find the Internet a great resource, also your local library. When asking for a book always get the ISBN number – usually it's on the first few pages somewhere with the date of printing, publisher's name etc. This really identifies the book you want.

Prickly pears? Why not farm them and value add to them – pickled prickly pears – what a goldmine! Mexicans have been doing this for years, also making prickly pear wine etc. Never look a gift horse in the mouth.

To remove labels store the bottles label up and the sun and wind will soon weaken the paper and glue. With labels down the micro-organisms will soon make a meal of them. Be very careful that no poisons have been in the bottles previously, soak, soak, soak and scrub. For labels, do it yourself and save heaps on this costly task. Once you ask your local computer guru all will be revealed.

Old lino tiles can contain lots of **ASBESTOS**. So can vinyl tiles and sheeting for floors. To determine how much asbestos, do a simple bend test. If the vinyl bends right around without cracking at the bend then it's probably 100 percent vinyl – very rare. The easier it cracks the more asbestos filler (cheaper to make). You must wear a good dust mask and eye protection – in fact, ring the workplace safety bureau in your state. This is an awful legacy from the past that will be with us for a long time.

Roberino,
PO Box 359, WOOLGOOLGA 2456.

The botanical name of the tree of heaven is Ailanthus altissima. We have heard this described as an environmental weed, or having the potential to be one. If it did deter rabbits, that would indeed be miraculous.

Quassia chips are available from: Green Harvest, 52 Crystal Waters Permaculture Village, MS 16, via MALENY 4552. Ph: 07-5494-4676.

Dear GR Readers,

Can anyone help me with a problem? In a way I'm a little late, but in the near future I would like to have more water available for my flower gardens and lawns. During the present drought it is such a struggle to keep plants alive and the grass from dying. Being an engineer and having access to an engineering shop, I am intending to **SINK A SPEAR PUMP**. I'm rather lucky in that I do not have to sink a bore very deep before striking water (2½ – 3 metres). The only problem is the water contains rather heavy concentrations of iron oxide and over a short period of time leaves an unsightly brown stain on anything it comes in contact with such as concrete or brickwork. Do any readers have solutions to the problem? I believe filtration is rather expensive and not completely satisfactory. What if the suction line at the bottom of a storage tank was raised up off the tank bottom 15 – 20 centimetres to allow the iron oxide to settle out over a period of time before extraction? Or would centrifugaling (spinning at high speed) the water do the trick? I would be grateful for any suggestions. Do any readers have an idea of what equipment I need and what techniques do I use?

I'm also interested in fabricating a small **PORTABLE METAL SMOKER** for smoking fish or meat. I would appreciate hearing from anyone who has any plans or ideas of a good efficient one to build.

R Banks,
PO Box 124, CURRUMBIN 4223.

Dear GR Readers,

Re Catherine's (GR 155) letter: I would advise tracking down a qualified homoeopath, ideally someone experienced in treating IBD, and also a naturopath, who will advise you on diet. Dramatic results are possible with minimal to no side effects using these systems of medicine, which are tried and proven over hundreds of years. Also be aware of the possible side effects of sulfasalazine (reduced tear production leading to eye problems).

Congratulations to the GR team on an excellent magazine.

Sue Robertson,
38 Mabel St, HIGHGATE HILL 4101.

Dear GRs,

We live in Catherine Hill Bay, 30 minutes south of Newcastle, 1½ hours north of Sydney, in a historic village built on a very scenic beach. We try to live in a self-sufficient manner and have a permaculture garden. We are considering a move to Tasmania to live because it seems like a clean and safe place to bring up our two children. So we are looking for any Tasmanian GR reader who would be interested in a **HOUSE SWAP** for a holiday period of two to four weeks at the end of this year (2003). We would consider offers from anywhere in Tasmania.

Brian Taylor,
58 Flowers Drv, CATHERINE HILL BAY 2281.
Ph/fax: 02-4976-3357.
Email: julbri@mailcity.com

Dear Grass Roots,

Greg Nicolls (GR 155) wanted recipes and other information about the **ROSELLA PLANT** (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*). A good source of information is a book by Juleigh Robins called *Wild Lime*. I found it in our local (rural) library and it should be easy to locate through a book store. Apparently, this plant is an exotic that is making an nuisance of itself up north. It has a native relative, *Hibiscus heterophyllus*, which is also edible. Both can be used in sweet or savoury dishes. If you have access to the Internet, do a search using Google and you should be overwhelmed with results.

Denise Wessner is interested in **NATIVE STINGLESS BEES**. I found a website today, from the Australian Native Bee Research Centre: http://www.zeta.org.au/~anbrc. They say that there are ten different types of native bees. Stingless bees are listed as number one, and they don't occur in Victoria, South Australia or Tasmania. The website is very detailed and I can recommend it, even if it involves waiting in a queue at the library to use the computer!

Ali Broome,
PO Box 483, HEALESVILLE 3777.

Anonymous letters will not be published. Please indicate if you would like personal details to be withheld.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GR Friends,

I've decided that the best way to read the Feedback section of this wonderful magazine is seated at the computer, keyboard warmed up and fingers at the ready! There are so many answers, comments and questions generated by almost every contributor's letter that by drafting this letter 'as I read' I might be able to add my small contribution to our DIY lifestyle.

The cover of GR 155 immediately inspired me to write and request someone with the know-how on **GROWING ROSELLAS** and recipes for the jam to please share their knowledge via these pages (Greg Nicolls, did you find out much?). I've bought two rosella plants and a bottle of the yummy jam (tastes like magnificent plum) and am fascinated by the pretty pink flowers and the unusual fruits, but what to do then? Growing tips? Pruning? Soil preference? To fertilise or not to fertilise? When to pick?

Jan and Guy Bevan: removing wine bottle labels – if soaking in warm, soapy water doesn't do it, try eucalyptus oil.

Bob McAllister: tea growing and processing – could someone do an article on this for all us tea drinkers please?

Roberino: you are truly a GR legend, as are all those who contribute – please keep all those tips and ideas and thoughts on life coming – we love them!

Heather Golding: Tank water and twin tub washing machines – I agree, they are a great way to control water usage. I love mine.

Sarah Munroe: **REDUCING WATER CONSUMPTION** – living with tank water and thinking creatively about every drop of precious H_2O is the way to be. Before you 'pull the plug' think of further uses. Bath water can be left in situ until the next day and used to wash the floor, clean down walls, water those pot plants. Washing up water can be left and used to rinse off the next lot of (never-ending) washing up. Use a timer when in the shower and aim to maximise the wash and minimise the water – try to better the time each day. Have a bucket in the laundry tub used for washing hands throughout the day (keep back a bucket of rinsing water from the wash for this purpose), then tip it out on the grass, trees, whatever. Fill a tumbler with water for brushing teeth instead of leaving the tap running: tip a bit on the brush to moisten, use a mouthful to rinse, the rest is tipped over the brush to rinse it off. Most importantly, tend to leaking taps and drips immediately. My pump alerts me to any such gremlins and I always (most times!) turn the pump off before going away from the house. I'd hate to return from shopping to find an undetected leak had depleted this most precious resource.

Laurel Dunphey: thank you for sharing your passion for Tasmania.

Dianne Miller: thanks for your praise of umbrella trees – I'll be planting some in my infant food forest and then waiting for the show to begin at flowering time!

Vicki Hooper: An easy soap making recipe was in GR 154 p 45 from B Rose. I've tried a very similar recipe and it's great. Just be very careful of the caustic soda, read and follow all safety instructions.

How about we all add a tip to the end of our letters to GR? Mine: add a slurp of white vinegar to washing rinse water instead of commercial fabric softeners. Gives the wash (especially towels) a lovely sunshine fresh smell and definitely displaces soap residue.

And finally, thank you for the wonderful, varied, practical, user-friendly, down to earth, interesting articles that appear issue after issue. A true inspiration!

Sue Jackson,
Birthamba Rd, BUCCA 4670.

Dear Megg & Readers,

It's been a while since I've written. I'm still living in Sydney. It's occurred to me that I can do something for Gaia, and small business and community infrastructures, by **SETTING UP A POLITICAL PARTY** (Blue Planet Party) while I'm here in closer touch with the bureaucracies. We hear many fine words and promises from the major parties, but their policies continue to savage the very things that matter in the lives of us small players. We want a decent future for Aussie citizens. If you can help get this rolling by becoming a member ($45/ann, GST incl) please drop us a line. We of course don't grovel to mega-capitalist or unionist donors. I reach retiring age soon and will then follow my heart's desire to live a self-sufficient lifestyle surrounded by nature. Any particular areas of Tasmania suit our species best? Regards to all and see some of you soon.

Phil Norman,
9/12 – 14 Landers Rd, LANE COVE 2066.
Ph: 02-9418-6544.

Dear GR,

I am looking for some old-fashioned **RECIPES** for **CHRISTMAS HAMPERS** this year. I am particularly interested in chilli pickled onions. If anyone could help with this it would be fantastic.

Amelia Soutter,
37 Illawara Cres, NORTH BAYSWATER 3153.

Hi,

Could anyone please tell us where to buy small quantities of taro, tropical vegies, rare potatoes for our gardens.

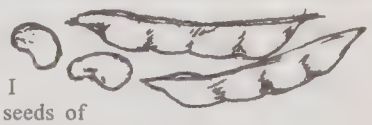
H Jones,
1/16 Duffy St, BUNDABERG 4670.

Dear Grass Roots,

I am writing in the hope that some like-minded people might like to write to me on a regular basis. Someone who shares the same 'earthy interests'. It's fairly isolated where I live, on a farm in East Gippsland. And yes, it's tough with the drought. I've always enjoyed the challenge of recycling. I like to use alternative cleaning recipes and animal care. One of which is **ALTERNATIVE KITTY LITTER**: use three parts sawdust (free from some Home and Mitre 10 stores) and one part bicarb (sold in bulk from produce stores). This lasts ages and has less smell. My other interests include permaculture, composting, gardening and cooking, especially new recipes. I love the country lifestyle. I am also looking for new interests such as self-sufficiency, building with mudbrick, hay bales or stone walls. Also solar power (how it works), companion planting, and massage such as Shiatsu. So if anyone would like to offer more information or have a chat, drop me a line. After all life's too short not to go green and recycle! I love *Grass Roots*, many thanks.

Julie,
PO Box 23, LONGWARRY 3815.

Dear GR Readers,



Does any reader have seeds of **GREEN WINDSOR BROAD BEANS**? I will pay postage or swap seeds of Crimson Cambridge broad beans. Thanks readers.

Helen Bizzai,
Box 386, GAWLER 5118.

Dearest Megg, Mary & all GR Readers,

I want to **THANK ALL OF YOU LOVELY GR PEOPLE** for writing to me. I have received so many letters and I answered all of them. Thank you for all the lovely pictures and seeds for my garden. I even have some lovely lady at Wollar giving me some chooks. I was feeling so down when I put my letter in GR 154, but now I don't feel like I am all alone. I now have about eight penpals. I love *Grass Roots* mag and I will never miss one magazine.

Yvonne,
7 Roxburgh St, KANDOS 2848.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GR Friends,

Greetings from the Land of Sand. During this summer any temperature under 40° C could be classed as a cool change; it has been a bit warm. During this last year the thorny wattles bloomed in profusion and made seed. This was a forerunner of worse things to come and now most of the *Acacia victoriana* through this arid land has died. Of course, it will burst into regrowth when we have sufficient rain and a new generation of plants will grow.

Recently, a subscriber was asking questions on a number of subjects, including **PRESSING COCONUT OIL**. I chanced to meet someone who told me that he had recently returned from the Philippines, where he had been instructing villagers how to extract coconut oil on a village basis using a process developed by CSIRO. The coconuts are split as usual and the meat scraped out of the shell. This could be done at the local market using a power driven shredder with a cutter on it like a rough pineapple. Otherwise, on a domestic level, a scraper like a spoon with serrated teeth would be used. The handle of this would be screwed to a stool and the user would straddle the stool with the scraper between his or her knees and scrape the meat out.

Then it is spread on metal sheets over fires until the moisture content is lowered sufficiently. After that the oil is pressed out using a screw press that seemed to be suspiciously like the olive press that I described some years back and caused so much kerfuffle in the olive industry. I would like to say that the 'inventor' got his or her inspiration from my article. After pressing, the meal can be used for domestic purposes. If anyone is interested in the scraper I can be contacted for supply.

Near the inception of *Grass Roots* I saw a number of inspirational ideas that have stood me in great stead through the intervening years. One was **WASHING THE SINUSES** out with warm salty water administered by use of a small teapot. I have been able to pass this idea on to quite a few people who have complained about clogged sinuses. Another is the use of **CAYENNE PEPPER FOR A FUMIGANT**. I was well aware of the effect of this on the eyes long before capsicum spray became the in thing for riot control. However, the pepper on the market nowadays is rather insipid compared with what it used to be, so I use desiccated hot chilli pods crushed up and burned. The mice, cockies and other vermin soon move out when the chilli smoke pervades the place.

Ours is a grand land but in the words of A B Patterson, 'If the Lord would send us rain, that would indeed be grand'.

Wally Davies,
CMB PARACHILNA 5730.

Dear Mary,

Thank you for forwarding the letter from Joan and your kind words about the fires. I will write to Joan and try to answer her queries, though I heard that **TAGASASTE IN QUEENSLAND**, the Darling Downs in fact, got eaten by every possible insect that dwelled there before stock could even get to it. Maybe Cooktown is different.

We have been very fortunate because the fire has been all round us, but, through the work of ourselves and other agencies, it has not managed to get onto the block at this stage. Though this is not the end. Any place in this area not yet burnt is still in danger, while those that have had the fire through are safe, as there is little left to burn.

The fire, not being a crown fire, will result in many dead leaves falling upon the ground, even as the fire moves away. So a fuel reduction burn close to settlements is crucial, though I for one will be sick of fires. We haven't been able to leave here for over a month now, and this continues because the fires are all round us. Though the fire got within 20 metres of one boundary, there are others where the fire is still burning, but no closer than half a kilometre. The worry of its presence cements us in place till it has either come or is gone out of ember range. Or we are burnt.

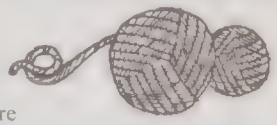
The drought before and during this fire has meant that most of the tagasaste trees will be cut down. Our sheep numbers only just got back up to those previous to the last drought. But this time we thought that we would not cut the numbers back, hoping that the tagasaste trees would be sufficient in number to hold them in good health. We are not yet certain that this will be that case. The chainsaw is running for an hour or so every day. The trees are being stripped of leaves and the bark being eaten. Hay is coming into the district, but we didn't take any in the last drought and hope that we will not require any in this situation, leaving it for those who have had their limited pasture burnt.

I am certain that you will receive some more articles from me regarding tagasaste, though the picture will probably not be pretty. Certainly, after something like this we will all know a little more about the plant. I would have liked to have seen what happened in a fire because tagasaste is supposed to be a fire retardant, but I am happy that we have it for fodder at the moment when there are sheep being shipped out daily to markets and agistment where it is possible to find any.

Stay well, kind regards as always.

Charlie Schroeder,
RMB 2446, CASSILIS 3898.

Dear Megg,



I have read GR over the last 20 years, even though I live in a suburb of Adelaide. I am a hand-knitter and I **REUSE WOOL** in order to make more garments as a form of recycling. I unpick the garment, which has to be wool or wool mixture, wrap the yarn around cake coolers and wash the wool on the cake coolers in wool mix. I rinse in tepid water, squeeze to get out most of the water, then hang in a cool place to dry. When dry, unwind the wool, form into balls and label the bag I store them in or future use: weight of yarn, ply, make (if known).

I have purchased near-new garments and recycled them this way from local charity shops and garage sales.

Many thanks,

Carol Brown (Mrs),
119 Ladywood Rd, MODBURY HEIGHTS 5092.

Dear GR,

Congratulations on a great mag, I love it. I have learnt so much from it. My son (37 years old) has just lost the hearing in one ear. He was told he has **MENIERE'S DISEASE**. There is no cause or cure, he was told. Can any reader help with information on improving his hearing? Alternative ideas?

I have also broken my porcelain doll head. Can I glue it, and with what?

Finally, I have an aloe vera plant. How do I make a cream from it that will last?

Betty,
55 Little Conadilly St, Gunnedah 2380.
Email: BettyCrocker@northnet.com.au

The phone number for the Meniere's Support Group of Victoria Inc is: 03-9775-2972. Email: menieres@outeast.cyberspace.net.au

Contributors and correspondents who want letters or articles returned are requested to include correct postage.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

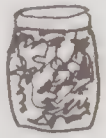
Dear Readers,

I would appreciate hearing from **OWNER-BUILDER READERS**, particularly the very middle aged, but not necessarily. We need to know: tips and advice for brick home using new materials and subcontract labour/owner building (me). Same again for kit home using new materials, not wooden exterior, subcontract labour/owner builder (me). Retail outlets servicing Rockhampton, Gladstone, Bundaberg. Tradespeople from these areas you can recommend. Other questions: It's very hot here. Do steel beams crack, moan and groan like I've heard? Do registered builders prefer not to touch kit homes because of their inability to guarantee quality as I've heard?

Will answer all letters. I live here permanently so your letters will find me, I just have no mail service run, thus the post office.

Dianne Barling,
C/- Post Office, MIRIAM VALE 4677.

Dear GRs,



I've found a recipe for **ROSELLA JAM AND CHUTNEY**. There aren't too many recipes for rosellas and occasionally readers write in requesting recipes.

To make rosella jam, shell the fruit and place the pulp in one saucepan and the seeds in another. Cover seeds with water and boil 15 minutes, strain, mash and then strain the liquid back into the pulp. Add one chopped green apple and cook until tender. Add one cup of sugar for every cup of pulp. Bring to boil, then simmer until jam sets when tested. Pour into sterilised jars.

For rosella relish you need: 200 g rosellas, coarsely chopped; 1 apple, cored, peeled and chopped; 15 g sultanas; 1 onion, chopped; 125 ml white vinegar; 5 g salt; 200 g caster sugar; pinch powdered ginger; ¼ tsp black pepper; 250 ml water. Place all ingredients in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Stir occasionally and simmer until relish thickens (about 45 minutes). When ready, pour into sterilised jars and seal. Will keep six months in the pantry.

Robyn Leah,
61 Eighth St, WESTON 2326.

Dear GR,

Great magazine, very handy for the Highlands of PNG where self-sufficiency is fast becoming a requirement and where I would like to pass on the tenets of green living before development destroys this place. I am writing to see if there is anybody who can point me in the right direction, or even pass on some information to me, regarding the **ESSENTIAL OIL BUSINESS**. I know of the processes involved, but would like to find machinery that does it, courses regarding same and so on.

Joesse Gardner,
Waghi Valley, Western Highlands Province,
PAPUA NEW GUINEA.

Dear GR folk,

I'm a 30 year-old, singleish mum, planning a move to **DORRIGO**, NSW – renting, to begin with. I've a three-year-old daughter, and I'm into Steiner/Montessori/home-school beginnings for her. As for myself, I'm a crafty, DIY sort, multi-talented. Looking for connections with like-mindeds, plus any goss/info that'd be useful for me to know, to ease the transition – like, how to garden with frosts? I am looking for somewhere simple and open to rent, and I love community, so if anyone has any ideas?

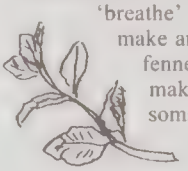
Light and love to you all in following your dreams. Thanks to all you inspirational people who write and contribute articles, especially Roberino! Thank you! I often get a chuckle or a lightbulb from you. And thanks to the team at *Grass Roots*. You're as invaluable to me as my local organic farm, Rosemary's, she's a gem.

Jewelstar,
3225 Pt Nepean Rd, SORRENTO 3943.

Dear GRs,

A lot of readers request information on **MAKING ESSENTIAL OILS**. What the sellers of expensive oil-distilling equipment don't tell you is that you need large amounts of plant material to extract a worthwhile quantity of oil: that is, a 200-litre drum. Some plants have a lot of oil (fennel) and others have almost none. Any person with basic plumbing skills can whip up an inexpensive still for you. A decent sized stainless steel saucepan does the job, a metre or so of copper pipe, some joiners, a few rubber seals. Fix a short piece of pipe through the top of the lid, with a joiner on the end. Flare the pipe ends, as in plumbing. Make a copper pipe coil to fix into a large plastic bucket. Mine is wired to two wooden rungs on top of the bucket. Keep the coil free from the sides, with the end coming out of the bottom front, sealed with some rubber and a big gob of silicone. Have a screw joiner at the top to match the one coming out of the lid. Hey presto. Fill pot with herbs/roses and cover with water. Soak overnight if you like; it gets stronger. Bruise it all up, of course. I used to screw my lid to the pot, but now I have a simple wire clamp. Seal around lid with flour and water to stop steam escaping. Fill bucket with water to cool the coil and turn on the heat. Water and oils (and other volatiles) recondense and drip out the bottom. As a safety precaution, don't use a seal to join the coil end to the lid end. (Bang!!) Stir water in bucket occasionally, heat rises and it gets hot. A friend freezes water in a plastic bottle and drops it into the bucket. The colder the water, the better. Don't run it too slowly. You want a reasonable trickle.

I make lots of distilled herb waters: lemon balm, chamomile, marigold, roses, orange blossoms, geraniums, angelica, whatever. I like to mix them. Often you only get a few 'flakes' of fat floating, except for fennel. Once I had a huge runny fennel oil slick on top of the water. You could work out some way of scooping it off. These waters are great fun, smell fantastic, contain all the properties of the plants. They are etheric and last for yonks. Culpeper says you should let them 'breathe' for a little while before you close them up. I make an eye water to bathe my eyes. I mainly use rue, fennel, celandine and fumitory. It works wonders and makes your eyes sparkle and feel good. The blossoms of thyme and marigold are reputed to enable the user to see fairies. Give it a burl! One of my friends has converted an electric urn into a still!



The volatile principles are the first to come out. The longer you distil, the weaker it gets. Stop distilling when the smell starts to fade. Or catch the first potent lot and keep it separate. I soak flowering rosemary in cheap wine and run it through to make spirit of rosemary, alias, queen of Hungary water. It's great liniment and good to use in hair tonics. The longer you run it, the more dilute the alcohol. Spirit of jasmine and rose is fantastic. Jasmine and rosewater, topically, fixed a friend's friend's sinus attack. You can splash these waters on, rinse your hair with them, add them to ointments and face masks, sip on them, use them in oil burners, rinse your eyes with them and so on, ad infinitum. Lots of fun and luxury. I just buy my essential oils. You can fill a jar with flowers or leaves, leave upside down in the sun and end up with an interesting fluid collected in the lid – a mini still.

Hope this is helpful to someone. If you run with it and make some exciting discoveries, feel free to drop me a line. If anyone has some wonderful concoctions they whip up out of their herb gardens and want to share their excitement, drop me a line. I also make soap using garden ingredients and a green oil that works wonders.

Christine Webb,
'Mountain View', VIA POOWONG 3988.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GR Readers,

I have been an enthusiastic reader of *Grass Roots* magazine for 12 years. I have had a lump in my left breast for nearly two years now. It has been diagnosed as a focal ductal epithelial hyperplasia (milk duct). I have tried all means of herbal medicines and herbal teas and also freshly squeezed juices every day. If anyone can help me get rid of my lump or tell me one of the nearest homoeopathy practitioners in Lutwyche or in nearby areas I would really be most appreciative. Love to hear from you.

YG,
4/53 Lamington Ave, LUTWYCHE 4030.

Dear GR Readers,

Please has anyone any information on oyster plant (*Acanthus mollis*) eaten by the Hunza in their staple diet. Do you eat the root (very fleshy), or only the leaf – dark green, shiny and quite large? I have tried the leaf and am still alive.

Lilian,
Ph: 02-6029-5254.

Hi People, Megg, Mary & all Others,

Had not bought a mag for sooo long. Was more than a little down, said blow it and bought GR. What a buzz. Revitalised.

Re the articles on greywater: I have seen an underground setup at work that cleared the water. It had chambers with outlets at different heights to run from one to other. End result – crystal clear water. The chap drank it. He was a plumber from Victoria and said all unsewered houses had them in his time.

I had heard of a similar idea that had charcoal and sand in the first two chambers to clear the water. I'm sure someone will know of these. But what can people renting do? Thought up a similar idea using 200-litre plastic drums on a stepped stand. The poor renters are so limited in making-do setups.

As everyone knows, it has been really hot. My tanks are small, but have not run out – yet. They've recently been topped up again – thank God. Had a couple of fires here, nothing drastic this time. All those other poor souls, to have to leave without anything. Even animals and pets left – unimaginable. Thought I had trouble till then.

Have found the same as Terri Guest (GR 155), that keeping plants in the shade greatly reduces their water needs. There was an article in GR many years ago about a modified type of hydroponics that used only a percentage of the water used by a normal gardening setup.

I have used clumping cat litter at the bottom of containers to help water retention. I use containers to grow in mainly: styrene boxes are good, dog food bags (plastic), washing machine bowls (even twin tubs); have used fridges in the past – even for worm beds. Bottles of water also work well. There were some screw-on attachments for sale in a mail order catalogue – they looked a good idea.

Diane Baker,
C/- Sprengers, MS 292, IPSWICH 4306.

Dear Like-Minded Folk,

I have been reading GR for so long I've forgotten how long and today have decided to write in and tell some of my experiences since realising I wasn't a kook for living or believing in the things I do. I have umpteen books on self-sufficiency, but the most fascinating ones are the three-book series called **FOXFIRE** books. They were written by high school students. The teacher was new and the kids followed him around, until one day he asked the kids if they wanted to write a magazine. They were to go home and ask their rellies about their lives. The three books are these people's stories. Your mag could almost be these books with an extra story. I love reading the Feedback section in particular. I've been tempted to write and find myself a life partner, but then I chicken out. I'm in the throes of renovating a Federation house on one acre and sometimes could do with an extra pair of hands. I haven't started in earnest yet with my garden; it's got a few fruit trees planted and I'd love **TO KNOW ABOUT PERMACULTURE** theory. I don't like spraying, but have a horrible pest plant called Cape tulip, which the shire made me have sprayed with Roundup. It didn't work and I was annoyed because now I have this stuff in my ground.

I have been told I could possibly have a WWOOFER to come and stay, but I only have an acre and I thought WWOOFERs were more for larger blocks of land.

Thanks once again for a fantastic but simple magazine, I thoroughly enjoy reading each one over and over.

Jeannette Pender,
PO Box 38, WICKEPIN 6370.

Dear Grass Roots,

As stated many times by everyone, I will repeat again, what a wonderful magazine. Thumbs up. This is my first letter to GR and I am wondering what kind of a response I'll receive. I am looking for natural ways to worm cows, sheep and goats. I am also wondering where I might be able to purchase tagasaste or tree lucerne. I have just started my vegie patch and hope that if anyone has any organic vegie seeds or herbs that I could purchase they will contact me. I am also looking for a particular plant – stinking Roger (*Tagetes minuta*). I will be waiting at my letter box with anticipation.

Gina Harris,
45 Bayview Rd, JINDIVICK 3818.
You can purchase tagasaste seeds from Green Harvest Seeds, ph: 07-5494-4676.

Dear GR,

My reason for writing is food. I am after any old-fashioned, **TRADITIONAL RECIPES**, in particular for tomato ketchup. The recipes I have are not much chop and I do love to experiment. Any cultural origin is fine – the more the merrier I say! So if anyone has recipes that they would like to pass on to a grateful cook, I would love to hear from you. Also, if somebody would like a particular recipe, I have heaps and love to share.

Caroline Williams,
CMA, BRENTWOOD 5575.

Dear Grass Roots,

Some questions to anyone who might help me with my problem concerning treated **PINE FENCING** and the use of **RECYCLED BITUMEN** as infill over drainpipes and under concrete paths next to fruit trees.

Our side boundary fence is hardwood, but because of subdivision next door there are two treated pine fences at 90° to the boundary. Also, recycled bitumen has been used about 2.5 metres from the fence as an infill over drainpipes. My fruit trees had been planted along this fenceline and the recycled bitumen might also be used under the concrete path next to the fence. My concern is that the tree roots, which no doubt will have crossed the boundary line, would sooner or later penetrate into the moist infill and pick up the leached chemicals of both these products.

I am ready to dig up some concrete and plant new trees, but how far do I need to go? How can I encourage the roots away from the boundary fence? How far from the fence would vines like kiwi fruit, banana passionfruit, choko, grape vine, all of which I think have big root systems, need to be?

Once the trees are removed I might plant geraniums along the fence, since I understand that these plants can pick up toxic minerals from the soil. Their prunings will be thrown away. I also intend to place baths along the fence in which food-bearing water plants will grow.

This would give me about 1.5 metres of clear space in which the land will not be used directly to grow anything edible.

Fred Bailey,
29 Taylor Ave, RESERVOIR 3073.

Thoughts On RSI & CARPAL TUNNEL

by Kel Connell, Karuah, NSW.

I suspect the cause of carpal tunnel would be similar to that of RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury). RSI was given a bad name in the 1970s because workers were claiming compensation and the medical profession could not prove whether or not a worker was being deceitful. The insurance companies fought back and got tough, so much so that anyone claiming to have RSI was immediately suspect. For the genuine ones the pain was very real; then carpal tunnel became recognised.

I was a boilermaker when I first developed RSI. Doctors treating symptoms (not the cause) gave me cortisone injections and liniments, with no effect. It seems I was seeking help from the wrong quarter. My job involved swinging a seven-kilogram hammer all day, every day. In my ignorance I thought I had arthritis.

While I was complaining one morning about my arthritis an old boilermaker claimed to know what my trouble was. Having swung a hammer all his life, he had learnt how important it is for the hammer handle to fit the hand.

He asked me, 'What would happen if you put a broom handle in your chicken house for a perch?'

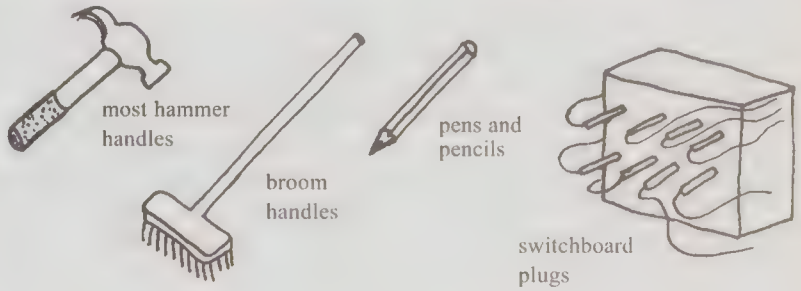
'Why?' I replied. 'The chooks sleep all night on that perch, their feet would cramp up from overgripping and they would develop crippled feet.'

The old boilermaker said, 'Well, that's your problem'. The hammer handle was too small for my grip. With stickytape he made the hammer handle fatter and cured my RSI. (Of course, I also changed my job.)

Two years later the RSI returned! What was I doing, I wondered? I was now a salesman driving all day in city traffic and under stress. Stress is often a factor as we tighten up and grip harder. The steering wheel was thin and smooth, causing me to overgrip. So I got some clothesline rope and wound it around the steering wheel. It was much more comfortable.

Liniments, solutions and injections had proven to be useless because each day my work practice was increasing the injury. Muscles use oxygen for energy. In the process toxins are produced, which are usually removed into the bloodstream and expelled. When a muscle is stressed, such as by overgripping, the toxins are trapped because the muscle does not relax. This prevents natural muscle action. Inflammation occurs, then pain.

Modern technology has resulted in designs too small for our grip (an average of about 50 millimetres) and also introduces stress to aggravate injury and pain. When using such tools on a casual basis, the injury may not occur as toxins and acid buildup may be cleaned out by the bloodstream. When using them permanently as a job, relaxing is important to allow cleansing operations to work. Even sweeping the floor could cause RSI or carpal tunnel if it's done under stress.



Many items designed to be held in the hand are too small for our natural grip.

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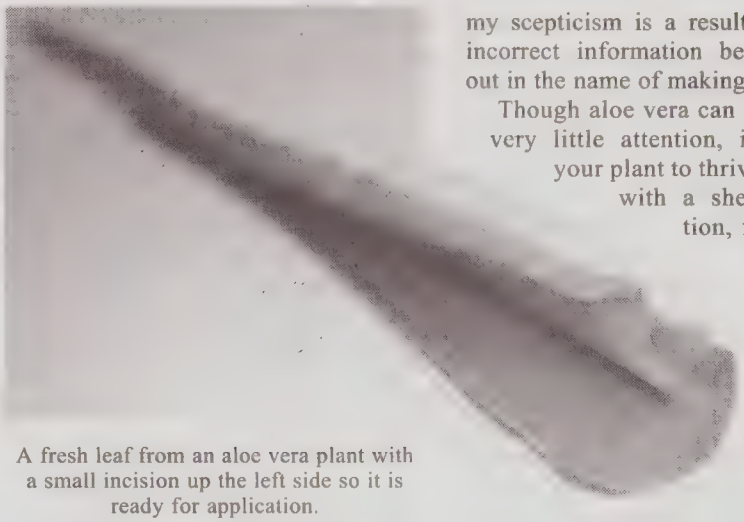
ALOE VERA
Remarkable Healing Herb

by Rosemary Sage, Bethania, Qld.

Some plants are unjustifiably taken for granted. Perhaps it's because they are very available, easy to grow, don't look particularly beautiful and, unlike so many of our other plants, aren't screaming for our attention. Aloe vera, I believe, is one of these. It will patiently get on with its existence until you are ready to give it what little consideration it requires. There are times when it might become a little thin looking, but conditions have to get pretty bad to kill this herb. Many readers will already have aloe vera in abundance, but that doesn't mean you can't expound its great qualities to the unconverted or to those who are new to the subject of self-sufficiency.

So how useful is it? The answer very likely lies in your medicine cupboard. Take a look in there and you are bound to find many half-used tubes of ointment for the treatment of minor burns, insect stings, sunburn, dry skin, eczema, cuts and grazes. Add up what these have cost and you will find that it involves quite a few dollars. For a small outlay, or even none at all if you beg a plant from one of your friends, you can have on hand your very own living first-aid kit. Should you have one of the problems just mentioned, you simply go to your plant and snap off one of its 'leaves'. Break open the skin to expose a clear gel-like substance and apply this directly onto the affected area.



A fresh leaf from an aloe vera plant with a small incision up the left side so it is ready for application.

I recall an occasion when I burnt my hand on a hot metal lamp but was able to cover the burn with aloe vera gel straight away. To my amazement, the pain was gone in seconds and no mark or scar was left. Why I was amazed I'm not sure; after all, aloe vera has been praised for having healing qualities of this nature for centuries. It's always exciting, though, when something turns out to be what it is said to be. I guess my scepticism is a result of a lot of incorrect information being churned out in the name of making dollars.

Though aloe vera can survive with very little attention, if you want your plant to thrive, provide it with a sheltered position, filtered light and moderate water. Chances are it will even look quite presentable. Avoid areas prone to water-logging or frost and you should have no problems. It is also suitable for life in pots, which might suit you better. The mature plant will produce offshoots or 'pups', which will increase your supply. From time to time it throws out a stem with a lovely apricot coloured flower.

Do yourself a favour; forget about expensive creams and beg or buy an aloe vera plant, which will very likely last for years.

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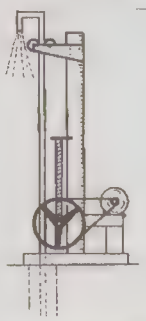

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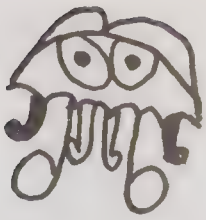
KIDS PAGE

UNUSUAL PETS



Pets teach us a lot about the natural world and how we fit into it. As well as observing and learning about the animals themselves, we learn about responsibility, care and respect, companionship and interaction. Would you like the companionship of a new pet? Do you already have a cat or a dog? Think and learn about the many other possible pets available to you, even those waiting for you in your backyard and in your imagination!

Garden Snails

You'll find many snails in your garden, especially after rain. Keep some in an aquarium with a flywire lid. Put a layer of gravel on the bottom and then soil, leaves and twigs. Feed them grass, vegetables and fruit and provide a little dish of water. Watch your pets breed. All snails are both male and female, so all lay fertile eggs. Watch them eat - use a magnifying glass to see them rip through their tucker quickly.

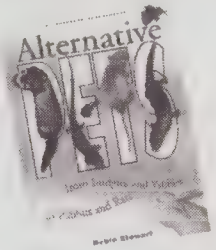
Crickets

To catch these for pets listen for the high-pitched trilling and chirping and remember that they like to hide under stones, wood and in cracks in paths. An aquarium with a flywire lid is also a good home for these pets. Layer with gravel and then sand, sticks and rocks. Feed mainly on wet grass and add a few vegetable bits for variety. Listen and enjoy your new pets singing. Several ancient civilisations kept them as pets in elaborate cages so they could enjoy their singing. Watch their flapping wings. This is how they produce the sound.

Note: With either of these little pets, let them back out into the big world near to where you found them if you tire of them.

Pets On Paper

These imaginary pets can be lots of fun! You decide what your pets look like, what they would feel like, smell like, and the sounds they would make. You can also imagine what they would eat, their habitats and personalities. Draw them, colour them and give them names - maybe something to do with their appearance or behaviour, or where the animal was discovered, or the name of the person who discovered it (you!). To make your imaginary pet take body parts of animals from the real world, or make them up. Remember your animal will need to see, touch, smell, eat, reproduce, prey, protect itself, move. Put parts together to form your own wild and wonderful pets on paper.



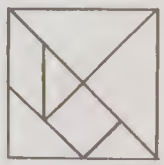
BOOK REVIEW
Alternative Pets

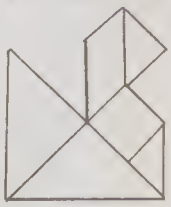
By Robin Stewart

This book presents a wide range of animals not always considered as pets, from furry and feathery ones to water- and terrarium-bound ones. The fascinating behaviours of over 30 kinds of animals are discussed and detailed advice is given regarding care, habitat, nutrition, breeding and more. A wonderful book for animal loving kids.

Hyland House Publishing, PO Box 122, Flemington VIC 3031. Ph: 03-9376-4461. RRP $19.95.

Tangram Pets





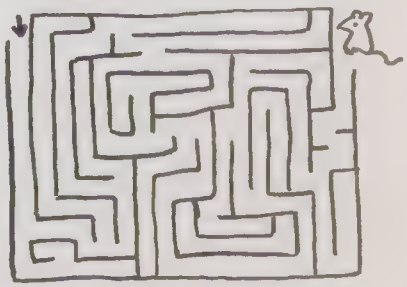
The tangram is an ancient oriental toy which has seven pieces or 'tans' - two small triangles, one medium-sized triangle, two large triangles, a parallelogram and a square.

The aim is to arrange the pieces to create shapes, human figures, buildings or animals. Silhouettes of shapes to create are found in books that accompany the tangram, but you can create your own designs limited only by your imagination.

Use these templates and some paper or cardboard to make your own tangram pieces. Then create your own tangram 'pet'.

Maze

Can you reach the rodent and make him your pet?



IN THE KITCHEN

Winter! Some people love splashing around in the mud; for others, the only thing that makes the chilly season worthwhile is lashings of comfort food. Here are some simple, hearty recipes to cheer you up when it's grey out. Remember, you are obligated to eat more in winter to keep warm, so dig in!

CAULI & CARAWAY SOUP

1 onion, finely chopped
1 leek, chopped into 3 cm pieces
1 tbsp olive oil
4 med potatoes, peeled and cubed
2 lt vegie stock
1 cup cauliflower florets
¼ tsp caraway seeds
½ cup cauliflower, finely chopped
½ cup Parmesan cheese, grated

In a large saucepan, sauté onion and leek in oil until translucent. Add chopped potato, cauliflower florets, caraway seeds and stock and bring to boil. Simmer for 15 minutes or until potato is tender. Let cool a little then purée in food processor. Add reserved cauli pieces, simmer for 15 minutes, then serve topped with Parmesan.

Serves 4.

ROAST PUMPKIN, SAGE & BLUE CHEESE RISOTTO

500 g butternut pumpkin
canola spray/olive oil
50 g butter
1 onion, chopped
2 leeks, chopped
400 g arborio rice
3 cups vegie stock
½ cup dry white wine
5 leaves sage
300 g organic blue cheese
½ cup Parmesan, grated
salt and pepper

Peel and de-seed pumpkin and chop into 4 cm squares about 3 cm thick. Place in an oiled tray, spray with canola or paint with olive oil and put in the oven to bake at 180° C for 45 minutes.

About 15 minutes later, heat butter in a large saucepan and cook onion and leek until they are translucent. Pour in rice and stir over a low heat for 5 minutes until rice is warm and coated with butter. Add a quarter of the stock, the white wine and the sage and bring to the boil, then simmer, stirring frequently, and gradually adding more stock as it is absorbed.

When all the stock in the risotto has been absorbed and the rice is tender (add additional water if necessary to cook it thoroughly), remove from the stove, stir through with blue cheese and Parmesan, and season with salt and pepper. Withdraw the roasted pumpkin pieces from the oven and stir them through the risotto carefully so as not to mush the pumpkin. Serve in bowls and top with Parmesan shavings.

Serves four.

BROCCOLI MUSHROOM QUICHE

1 sheet shortcrust pastry
1 head broccoli, chopped
8 med mushrooms, sliced thinly
1 cup milk
3 eggs, beaten
2 tbsp butter
1 tbsp flour
1 tsp salt
nutmeg
cracked pepper
100 g pine nuts
1 cup cheese, grated

Line a quiche dish with pastry and bake at 375° C until slightly browned. Cook broccoli until tender. Combine milk, eggs, butter, flour, salt, pepper and then beat.

Sprinkle a quarter of cheese onto quiche crust to seal. Layer broccoli and mushroom on top and sprinkle with pine nuts. Pour egg mix in and top with remaining cheese. Bake for 40 minutes until golden.

OATMEAL WALNUT BISCUITS

½ cup butter
½ cup raw sugar
½ cup brown sugar
1 egg
1 tsp vanilla
¾ cup SR flour
¾ tsp ground cinnamon
¼ tsp salt
¼ cup walnuts, finely chopped
1½ cups quick-cooking rolled oats

Beat butter in a bowl with electric mixer, on medium to high speed, for 30 seconds. Add the sugars, egg and vanilla, beat, then add half the flour, plus the cinnamon and salt. Beat until thoroughly combined, then stir in remaining flour. Stir in the nuts and oats. Shape dough into two long rolls; wrap each in waxed paper and chill for 6 to 24 hours.

Cut dough into 1 cm slices. Place on a greased tray with room for them to expand. Bake at 180° C for 8 minutes, or until edges are lightly browned. Cool on baking sheet for 1 minute before removing to a wire rack to finish cooling.

Makes about 35.

GLUHWEIN

1 bottle red wine
1 stick cinnamon
3 or 4 cloves
pinch nutmeg
slice of lemon or orange

Place all ingredients in a saucepan, heat quickly until it just starts to boil, strain off the spices and sip it hot in front of an open fire.

I Remember When...

by Barbara Chapman, Ravenshoe, Qld.

It's amazing how events of our childhood can remain with us forever, their influence reverberating down the years.

Teachers, in particular, have the power to shape our lives. My standard four teacher gave me a wonderful year and influenced my life forever. Her name was Miss Norton; she was old, or at least I thought she was. She was probably in her 60s, with white, tightly permed hair and glasses on the end of her nose. She wore good solid shoes, home-sewn floral frocks and smart cardies.

Miss Norton was very strict in her teaching methods, discipline was her forte. We all said the Lord's Prayer, every morning of the year. No one spoke in class out of turn and teacher was always addressed as 'Miss Norton'. Her praise was plentiful and she encouraged the weak learners, working one on one with the slow readers. She understood embarrassment in a shy child and took the time to draw them out.

Many children came to school in those days without lunch. Miss Norton brought sandwiches for them and never made them feel bad about it.

I learnt a lot in her class and, although I feared her at times, she moulded a big portion of my character. Her stories on a Friday afternoon brought Marco Polo's adventures to life. It was absolutely wonderful. We rested our heads on our folded arms on the desk top while she read. I still think of her with fondness and hope she is with the educated angels.

Sometimes it is family members who stay in our minds. I remember my grandmother who used to put me on her lap and peel an orange for me. The same grandmother would call me a 'dirty little midden' in her broad Scottish accent, and chase me with her broom when I displeased her. But on Sunday in church I would sit proudly beside her and sing hymns. She would be wearing her best black hat with its rich red rose and her perfume of wintergreen would waft around me.

The best of childhood memories, somehow, are to do with food. I remember when a pie was only two pence (tuppence) and butter was kept cool in a jar underground with a sack over it.

Our food was cooked with nothing added but a pinch of salt. There were yummy roasts on Sundays with spuds, carrots, parsnips and pumpkin. There was often apple pie with custard, or rhubarb and junket. Sago was called frogs' eggs and macaroni was drainpipes. Whitebait fritters were not really made from whitebait at all, but from grated potato.

Everyone we knew had a house cow, so cream was not a luxury at all. Poor man's pudding consisted of jam on bread with rich cream poured over it. Bread was also spread with dripping and fried in the pan. We had bread and milk cooked up in a pot, made by our dad. His father had made it and my children are still making it; recently I saw my grandson making it. Yum! The crust of the bread was almost black and tasted delicious, if you could get first choice.

At Christmas every child in the family got a peppermint walking stick in the pillowcase with their toys. An orange and a banana were also added. Santa never drank his milk or came down our chimney. I know because my brother Graham tried and got stuck.

One of the more unusual foods we enjoyed was prairie oysters roasted on the fire. These are sheep's nuts, not from the head end. Lambs' tails tasted all right too. Cooked witchetty grubs tasted like peanuts. Our cat always enjoyed them the most.

Porridge for breakfast was a good way to start the day, and a few handfuls of wheat from the chooks' bag was very filling to a hungry child.

I always got into the sugar bin with my fingers, that was my sweet. Dad made us drinks with jelly crystals and Mum made good girdle scones. Pikelets shaped like teddy bears were another treat. I loved syrup pudding, and still make it. It's called fake plum duff and is made from bread with spices added.

Dad caught rabbits, Mum roasted them and my sister Heather did the vegies. She worked hard, always cooking the tea when Mum was sick. The stewed apples with the skin on and the lumpy custard made the meals different.

The free milk at school every day gave me good teeth. I loved it when it had ice on the top.

Water was generously pumped from a well by means of a long-handled pump. Bread was homemade and vegies were home-grown. A carrot pulled straight from the garden, brushed off and eaten, never hurt us with a bit of dirt flavouring.

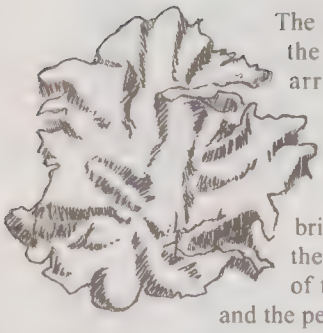
Flour wasn't bleached, yoghurt was sour milk, and there was always a garden party somewhere. We could buy little baskets filled with homemade coconut ice, chocolate fudge or honeycomb. We used to hold our own little fairs in the holidays and made all sorts of iced cakes, butterfly cakes and coconut biscuits that we sold to our friends.

Chooks were for laying, clucking and plucking. The bog was the dunny out the back, and look out if the nightman came if you were still seated. There were coupons for this and coupons for that. Our neighbour, Mrs Cammick, made us apple pies and we gave her rhubarb. Dad rode a bike and had ferrets to go rabbiting. There was always something you could catch, including the chicken pox.

Sunday nights we would listen to stories told around the fire, while we toasted bread on a wire and ate it dripping with Golden Syrup. Isn't it wonderful we can remember.

Sensational Seaweed

by John Mount, Woodford, Qld.



The thought of the bedding arrangements in some stately 19th century homes brings to mind the fairy tale of the princess and the pea. The mattresses were often piled so high that bed steps were required to access the top of the bed. They rested on a device known as a 'palliasse', a firm base usually of straw. Ordinary mattresses were filled with anything from seaweed and coconut fibre to paper and bran, but ideally would be made of horsehair or chaff, which made them cool and reasonably comfortable. Often, the uppermost mattress was made of soft goose, duck or chicken feathers, or the more affordable cotton mill-puff, which provided warmth and comfort for the sleeper.

Nowadays, seagrass mattresses are sought after for their healing, insulating and anti-pest properties. Some veterinarians recommend commercially made seagrass mattresses for pets to repel fleas and other insect pests.

In the late 19th century the ash from burnt kelp was used in the manufacture of soap, glass and bleaches. Later, in the early 1900s, it was found that kelp contained iodine, which was used in medicine and photography. Today, kelp is still used commercially in the food, pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries.

The heat- and sound-insulating properties of seaweed are attributed to the air spaces when the plant is packed close together. It is also thought that the silicon content of seaweed makes the material strongly fireproof. Because of these qualities it was once sought after and used well into the 20th century for housing insulation. Kelp fibre was also used in the 17th century as a packing or gap-sealer for leaks in ships' hulls. In fact, seagrass material was popularly used as thatch in roofs of 17th century homes in rural coastal areas of the United Kingdom and Europe. It was found to be superior to straw because it took longer to rot, had excellent flea-proof qualities, and was very slow to burn. I recall reading somewhere that the Regent theatre in Yarram, Victoria, once used seaweed in the ceiling for insulation. It was also popular in the United States in the form of a blanket known as a Cabot's quilt, named after its inventor. This was not only placed between the walls of houses, but used in radio station studios in both the United Kingdom and America for sound insulation.

Seagrass has been extensively used in the past in various countries to bind clay and soil in embankments and in areas prone to sand and soil-shifting. In fact, in the Netherlands it has frequently been used in dikes. This form of use has translated into modern times, with seagrass drift being used to produce a type of mulch that can be applied to sand dunes and other areas of the coastline to help with stabilisation. It helps to form an erosion-resistant mat, suitable for seed germination in sand dune rehabilitation programs, and has been used in several places around Australia.

I've come across a number of references to the use of seagrass as a fertiliser, although it could be the algae and other marine organisms entangled within the seagrass mat that provide the nutrients.

The kelp, *Posidonia oceanica*, mixed with lime and phosphates, was used in Mediterranean countries as a meal for feeding poultry. This idea was once experimented with in South Australia, although only on a limited basis.

Washed up seaweed wrack is commercially used to make garden mulch, and there are now a number of seaweed 'tonics' for the garden available at various gardening outlets.

It seems there are new uses being found all the time for the various families of seaweed. A recent trip to the chemist revealed a dressing, derived from kelp alginates, for bleeding wounds.

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Coloured Egg Layers

by Megg Miller, Nagambie, Vic.

Blue-shelled eggs for breakfast might sound astonishing, but if you obtain the unique Araucana fowl you can have all the blue eggs you like. It is a quirk of nature that this breed produces a shell in tones of blue or green. What's more, the colour is not pigment laid down on the shell, as is the case with brown-shelled eggs, but the entire shell is coloured.

The Araucana (pronounced Ara-kay-near) is considered the only breed that naturally carries the gene for the blue/green shell colour. It can be introduced into other breeds relatively easily, and for this reason you'll find lots of crossbreds that lay blue eggs are erroneously taken to be Araucanas. Cream Legbars are the main example of a pure breed that's had the coloured shell gene introduced successfully.

What is the origin of the blue/green shell colour? It's rather a mystery and some unusual explanations have been offered over the years. One school of thought puts forward the idea of cross-breeding of local South American fowl with the Tinamou, a game bird that lays coloured eggs. Other theories suggest a cross with a now extinct wild pheasant from Mexico, or that local fowl underwent adaptive changes to produce an egg that was camouflaged in vegetation in the heavily forested area they inhabited.

Why exactly the Araucana produces the blue/green eggs and other breeds don't isn't understood, but scientists know that pigments or porphyrins produce colour and patterns on eggshells. These result from the breakdown of haemoglobin from ruptured red blood cells carried via blood to the uterus, where calcium carbonate is laid down along with pigment to complete egg making.

A SOUTH AMERICAN BREED

The Araucana is recognised as being of Chilean origin, the breed having been kept by indigenous Indians of the Araucania region. They were fierce fighters and held off Spanish invaders longer than other indigenous groups had been able. This is thought to explain why their fowl wasn't widely dispersed and why it didn't come to the attention of Darwin when he visited in the 19th century.

Female Araucana head – tiny pea comb, muffs, beard and profuse neck feathering.

In Chile there wasn't a standard type of Araucana and when specimens were brought to the attention of the poultry fraternity in the 1920s several distinctly different looking birds were grouped together as Araucanas. Stock in Australia has come from English specimens. These have muffing on the face, not ear tufts, and are fully tailed, not rumpless. In North America Araucanas display ear tufts and rumplessness and those with muffs and tails are called Americana.

IDEAL FARM BIRD

Araucanas are ideal as farm birds as they enjoy freedom and need minimum attention. They're exceedingly hardy and robust and will happily roost in trees and lay their eggs in bushes and other secret

Araucana hens produce large clutches of chicks when allowed to steal a nest.

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A multi-coloured flock of Araucanas.

sites. The hens will sit and cover between 14 and 20 eggs, unbeknown to you, and arrive at morning feed with a clutch of pretty chicks. Be warned that their self-sufficiency skills are so good they can quickly go feral and your flock become wild and unmanageable or be devoured by predators.

They adapt well to housing and life in a large pen or controlled free range and make cheeky, inquisitive and busy backyard birds. Classed as a light breed, they're smallish in stature; adult males reach 2.70 – 3.20 kilograms and females 2.25 – 2.70 kilograms. A miniature version can also be obtained. Generally, specimens are on the small side with a tendency to lay a smallish egg. In the past breeders have intermingled standard size and miniatures, with the result that a lot of birds fall into the middle size range.

Araucanas have a number of special features. Because any bird crossed with the breed could lay a coloured egg, it's important to know the traits that are desirable in a purebred. They should have a long deepish body, a moderately small head with a tassel (a 'flat' crest that projects back horizontally and is not globular in shape like the Silkie hen's), a small pea comb, thick muffling covering the face and ear lobes, and an abundant beard. The neck is well covered by thick medium-length feathers and is referred to as a cape. Legs and feet must be free from feathers or stubs and coloured slate or willow to olive green. The only exception is the Cuckoo (barred) variety, which may have white legs with blue spots. Eyes on all varieties are dark orange and the beak is horn coloured.

Araucanas come in a range of colours, but the most popular is lavender, an even shade of blue-grey. Others include black, white and the common Old English Game colours like black-red, blue-red, partridge etc.

Egg colour varies considerably, each hen having a particular hue that will be strong at the commencement of lay and fade out towards the end of the season. Individuals can lay shells in shades of blue, green, pink, olive or khaki. The latter result from the crossing of blue/green-shelled layers with brown-shelled layers in the former or previous generations.

One aspect not mentioned in discussions on coloured shells is keeping quality. Having kept white, tinted, brown and blue-shelled layers for many years I've repeatedly noticed that the keeping qualities of blue eggs are inferior to khaki, white or brown eggs. The shells are always thick, in fact thicker than the white and tinted eggs, which are always very large, and subsequently thinner shelled. Yet the smaller, stronger-shelled blue eggs repeatedly have displayed a faster exchange of gases and deterioration of egg contents.

Roosters are usually good natured, active and fertile. Reports of aggressive encounters with owners are rare. Hens lay a good sized clutch before going broody and are reliable sitters and caring mothers. The hens lay on for years, egg size increasing but numbers dropping noticeably each year. Life span is around seven to eight years.

Interested readers might like to join the Araucana Club of Australia and will certainly learn more about the breed and obtain access to a breeder directory. Membership is $10 yearly. For information send an SAE to: Bruce Pattinson, PO Box 228, North Richmond, NSW 2754.

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No-Dig Gardening

In the early years of *Grass Roots* no-dig gardening was all the go, enthusiastically promoted by Sydney-sider Esther Deans. Her book *Growing Without Digging* was immensely popular. Rereleased recently, it will inspire a new generation of gardeners. Many Grassrooters have practised this method and even adapted it to suit their special needs, as these stories show.

JENNY'S GARDEN

by Jenny Beatson, Lilyfield, NSW.

Lots of people still write and ask about 'no-dig' gardening and I wanted to tell readers about my experience with the Esther Deans garden. I built one in 1983 right here in the middle of Sydney. GR 148 does mention her book and, as well as recommending it, I wanted to share a personal experience.

I read about Esther's garden magic in *Family Circle* magazine in 1981 and, armed with nothing more than the article, I built my first ED garden, as instructed, straight on top of a concrete car parking pad in the back of my rented inner-west Sydney house. First, I built a 150-millimetre-high retaining wall of recycled bricks, some from the property, others picked up from demolition sites. But you can enclose the site with planks or anything else you can think of. I laid down newspapers on the concrete about 25 millimetres deep – collected Saturday *Sydney Morning Heralds* plus lots begged from friends. Then I sprinkled the newspapers lightly with lucerne hay and a little organic fertiliser, the famous Dynamic Lifter! I added a thick layer of straw (I was lucky, I got 'used' straw from a local stables!) and a good layer of compost. The compost I didn't have, and had to buy from the nearest cheapie organic market. This was my biggest expenditure.

Then I was ready to plant. I put in my beloved potted azaleas, which I'd schlepped from one rented property to the next for years, assorted other root-bound pot plants and a brand new bird's nest fern. Everything went berserk, and was still going strong when I moved three years later (I repotted the azaleas and took them with me). I can't praise the Esther Deans garden highly enough – go get the book as recommended in GR!

Jenny's plants look great even in winter thanks to the rich soil from no-dig methods.

Not only is the Esther Deans garden no-dig, but you can build it on a platform, for those who can't bend and stoop as they once did. The gardens take about an hour and a half to build, and Mrs Deans reckoned they last about seven years, then you just start all over again. Oh, and she was also into companion planting and natural pest control.

TERRY'S LOW-DIG GARDEN

by Terry Tranter, Mannum, SA.

I live in a semi-arid climate where the rainfall is roughly 250-plus millimetres per annum. Growing our own vegies is great, but the horrendous water bill barely offsets the savings made by not buying from the shop.

So it was with growing apprehension that I watched this expensive commodity run off the garden, along the paths and eventually end up out to sea.

I followed conventional wisdom and formed raised beds to stop the roots becoming bogged. After watching the plants dry up as the water ran off the garden (which contained a fair amount of nonwetting sand), I decided on a new approach. What if I raised the paths and let the water run *into* the garden? What would happen?

'The roots would rot! That's what would happen?' Okay, I hear you, that's what would happen. But what would happen if I built a compost bed in it?

'What? It would act as a buffer and the roots would not rot.'

So I got stuck into it. The ground is nonwetting sand over lime clay – not the best mixture. First I dug deep holes, using plenty of water to soften the soil, some round, some rectagularish, about

one by two metres; enough to reach the centre without keeling over face down in the dirt. I went down about 600 millimetres, using the clay lime subsoil to build up the paths.

I half-filled the holes with branches, twigs, old maize stalks, dead cosmos plants (don't chop them up – you're never going to see them again). Following this went on about 100 millimetres of horse manure with a bit of chook poo for luck. Plus, of course, a skim of lime. On top of this went 25 millimetres deep of 50-millimetre wide torn newspaper strips (they won't form a barrier, it's always damp down there). Next came fresh green weeds, topped up with a layer of lucerne and finished off with 50 millimetres of soil. I gave the whole thing a good one-off soak and let it rest. You can wait until the weeds come up from the horse manure, or, if you're a bit like me, bung your seedlings in straightaway and pull the weeds out later. Cover with mulch and wait.

Now for the tricky bit. If I gave it a big watering and filled the hole up, the roots would rot, but because the roots of plants only reach 100 – 150 millimetres there is no point in putting more water than that in. So what do we do?

'We water carefully, that's what we do!' Right! Over a long period the water will eventually seep down and form a colloid with the ingredients, with the added bonus of the composting branches creating a good fertiliser. Over 12 months this is exactly what has happened; worms are everywhere, no doubt tunnelling away under the paths creating one big worm paradise.

Now for the paths. These are rounded on top to allow runoff into the gardens, but they are slippery when wet, to say the least. What to do? Anything like sawdust will blow off. 'Lippia!' That's right – lippia, a free-growing weed that will appear from nowhere. Allow it to grow on the paths and keep the edges trimmed with a spade. It's very hard-wearing. There are other flat-growing weeds that spring up and are also good for the job. In fact, it is a good idea to always let a few weeds grow; they are high in minerals and are good for the compost. Now, as we pull the old plants out to feed the chooks we can replace them with compost from the heap, which we have still kept going.

So that's it. It works for me and I hope others might try something similar.

PS: I doubt this would work in a high-rainfall area. That's all.

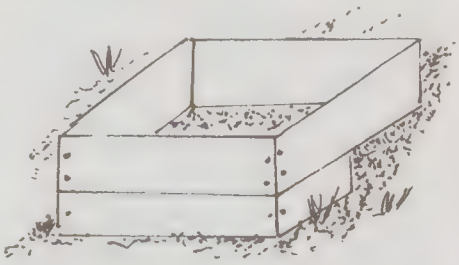
Raising a garden bed up on legs so people in wheelchairs or with back problems could enjoy plants was an idea promoted by Esther Deans.

ON A SLOPING SITE

by Vicki Thornton, The Patch, Vic.

After moving into our new home with an acre of land to play with, I began to twitch for a vegie garden. This time I wanted a no-dig garden. I had done some basic research and found a 'recipe', but my husband first wanted to build a frame to edge the garden. Ironbark sleepers were his chosen building material, however, getting them to the site was easier said than done.

We live on a small hill in the Dandenong Ranges and the site for the vegie patch was behind the house and up over a retaining wall. Getting the sleepers up the bank was interesting, but nothing that a piece of sturdy rope and two people pulling like draught horses wouldn't fix. My husband then built a simple square construction: two sleepers at the front, one at the back, and the sides were one and a half dug into the ground. At last I had my frame.



We went away for Christmas and I had to wait until our return before I could begin the next stage. I had a willing and eager helper, my three-year-old nephew Ryan. And so we began. It was a simple matter of layering newspaper, pea straw and blood and bone, all watered in well. Not surprisingly, with the toddler on the end of the hose, the garden, the straw, the fertiliser and I got very well watered.

To finish my recipe I needed 10 centimetres of topsoil. Unfortunately, our finances couldn't allow the pur-

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chase, but we had a mound of earth about 10 metres away from the vegie site. It was obvious I needed to dig up the soil and move it to my garden. Unfortunately, the wheelbarrow had decided to have a tyre accident, so to move the soil I improvised. I used an Esky. Filling it halfway, I could then carry it back down to the garden. I gave up counting how many Esky-half-fulls after 21 trips. After two days I had the bed ready, then the fun task of planting began.

By the time it was finished my brother-in-law warned me I had left the vegies too late and I would get very little, if any, produce. Since then, we have picked lettuce and baby spinach leaves daily; there are tomatoes ripening on the bushes; we have picked beans and cucumbers and I am watching the capsicums eagerly for the first to pick. A variety of other vegies are thriving at different stages of growth, even in the dry weather. I water by hand (we are on tank water) once every three days. As the straw beneath breaks down, the level of the garden is diminishing. This is where my compost heap comes into its own.

My no-dig garden did eventually involve digging, lots of it, and plenty of earth moving, but it was fun and the satisfaction I have in my garden cannot be measured. I am a beginner in the art of no-dig gardening and eager to learn. I now have plans for a twin to be built beside my first garden . . . and yes, it will be a no-dig bed as well. I might wait though, until we have a wheel back on the wheelbarrow!

Above: Corrugated iron sheets folded and bent to use as garden edging.

Below: Berry canes planted in cardboard boxes of rotted manure within iron.

RAISED BEDS SAVE THE BACK

by Neville Jackson, Valhalla.

When faced with the prospect of a 'bad back' for years, and possible arthritis, I made new raised garden beds. Railway sleepers are great as edging, but heavy and expensive, so I cast about for ideas. A pile of corrugated iron sheets caught my attention, but they were sharp edged and a bit high for my needs at 85 centimetres. This height would have taken me eons to fill, but would probably be great for someone with plenty of organic material and/or a small garden bed.

I folded some sheets in half and stood on them to flatten the fold. This gave a much more reasonable height for the sides. I made corner inserts from several short pieces by hammering the corrugations flat in a vertical line, then bending at right angles. It looked very rough indeed at first glance, but trim enough when inserted in the side pieces and staked in place.

My first project was a new berry trellis. The dimensions of the bed were determined by the supply of iron sheets. First, I flattened cardboard boxes and laid them over the entire bed area to kill and recycle grass while encouraging earthworms. The card-

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board extended outside the bed area to provide a weed-free section for pathways. This area I later covered with sawdust or grass clippings.

I placed folded-over corrugated iron in position, with 100-millimetre overlaps, then inserted the corners. The ugly 'wings' were now hidden within the sides and gave support. Timber stakes were driven in at joins and corners.

At this stage I was physically unable to bring in the necessary loads of stable manure needed to fill the new bed, so during winter I planted canes in cardboard boxes full of manure and placed them in their final position. Several strings tied around prevented box collapses until bed materials were found to heap against them. This maintained plenty of moisture until the entire bed was filled. In the meantime the canes were away! The beds were eventually topped up with lots of cut grass, stable manure, wood ashes, compost and worm farm goodies and the boxes left in situ to rot away.

The next project was a corn bed, made in similar fashion to the berry bed, except that it was square, so that the corn could easily be wind-pollinated. I used a quantity of shredded paper as the bed base. Materials used to fill the bed were horse manure, ashes, and some spare earth rich in soil organisms and earthworm castings to get things started. To sweeten, garden lime was sprinkled all over and watered in. The contents were added as several layers till the bed was proud of the sides. After a fortnight, settlement and earthworm activity had dropped the height back to level with the tin sides.

I planted sweet corn at a depth of 150 millimetres, because a late frost was possible – a method once used by the Aztecs. The theory is that by the time the corn is up frosts are unlikely and the plants have an extensive root ball and require less hilling up later. The pre-Colombians also placed a small fish in with each corn seed. We're too far from the sea, so my corn has to make do with seaweed extract and fishpond water. When the corn is about 100 millimetres high I use grass clippings as mulch.

Later I planted various squashes in the corners to spread under the corn and sprinkled and raked amaranth seed along the borders. An Aztec farmer would have felt right at home. I scattered some cosmos seeds around to provide incentive for pollinators to visit the flowers.

Raised beds have other advantages:

• They are almost free of weeds, which sometimes provide havens for garden pests.

• Many gardens on ground level would otherwise become waterlogged after extensive rains.

• Raised gardens help to avoid frost damage.

• They are also a boon for the elderly or infirm. Many more would avail themselves of garden activities if provision was made for people-friendly gardens. Aged and infirm especially enjoy the outdoor activity, interests and company that a garden provides. Better nutrition and a healthier lifestyle always result.

Above: Square corn bed in preparation, full of organic goodies.

Below: Corn bed in full production with squash, amaranth and cosmos thriving.

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Sharon's Simple Crochet

by Sharon Greenaway, Strathfieldsaye, Vic.

We never cease to be impressed by readers' resourcefulness and practicality. Wanting to crochet a warm hat and slippers, Sharon Greenaway made up her own simple patterns. They're a great way to use up scraps of wool and keep cosy this winter.

After seeing the pattern for knitted slippers in *Grass Roots* last winter (GR 151), and being a person who prefers to crochet, I was inspired to design a pair of socks-cum-slippers for other like-minded people.

BED SOCKS

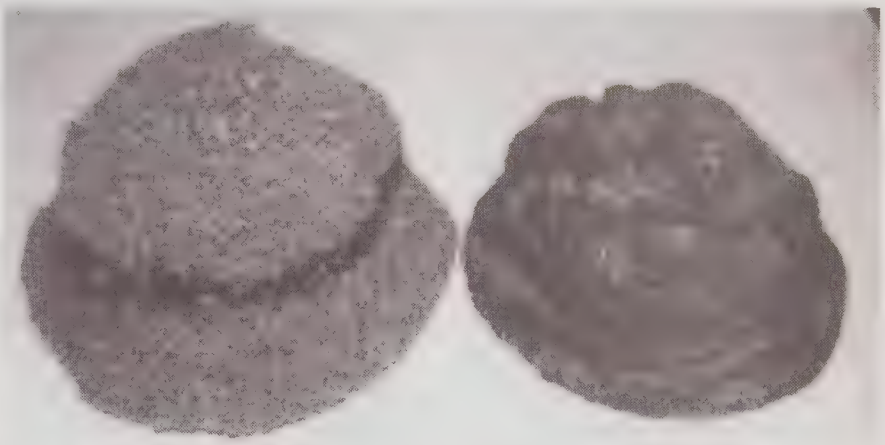
I used a size 6 hook and some leftover 12-ply wool. If you are using 8-ply wool, reduce the size of your hook to a 5 or 4. You can use acrylic yarn, but I find wool is far cosier. My tension is usually loose, so I crocheted just enough chains to reach the length of the foot (heel to big toe) the socks were going to be for. Add a few more chains if your tension is usually tight.

Once you've finished the chains, turn, then one double crochet into second chain, continue until the end. Turn, one chain, double crochet into next chain, until end. Repeat this until you have a square piece of work that, when folded in half, is big enough to fit your foot. Fasten off.

To sew up, you will need more wool and a large needle. Fold the piece in half lengthways, sew up one end, this is the heel. With the other end, fold both sides into the centre, sew the end and then continue sewing up the middle. Measure where your foot will go in and then tie off.

ABBREVIATIONS

ch = chain
sl st = slip stitch
tr = treble
half tr = half treble (A half treble is yarn over hook, push through stitch and yarn over hook, pull back and then yarn over hook, draw through all 3 hoops.)



Two different versions of Sharon's crocheted hat, which recently won a second prize at the Bendigo Show.

SLIPPERS

To make these socks into slippers, sew some thin, smooth pieces of scrap leather to the soles. Depending on the texture of the leather, you might need to punch small holes around the perimeter of each piece before sewing. These pieces stop the socks from slipping. Make sure the pieces are large enough to fit under the balls and heels of your feet so that you don't feel any ridges as you walk.

HAT

Slippers made, I really had the crochet bug and thought I'd have a go at making myself a woollen hat I'd be happy with. One of the problems I'd always found is that I have a big head (no puns please!) and any hat that I tried on didn't suit me. I've since made quite a few for all members of my family (yes, we all have biggish heads!). Each one is unique and fits the wearer quite well. I entered two hats in the Bendigo Agricultural Show, one of them won second prize.

The type of yarn you use, whether you are using wool, wool blend or acrylic, as well as the size of hook you are using, will mean each one will look different. You can be as creative as you like, changing colour or even types of wool throughout. I prefer to do this at either round 10 or 20. I'm a loose crocheter so you will need to increase the size of the hook if you crochet tightly.

Don't worry if you have not completed a full set in a row, but always end

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with a joining slip stitch into the chain.

Using a size 4.5 hook and 8-ply yarn, with main yarn colour, make 5 ch. Sl st to form a ring.

Round 1: 1 ch (13 half tr in ring). Sl st to ch to join.

Round 2 to 5: 1 ch (1 half tr in next ch, then 2 half tr in next ch, repeat to end). Sl st to join.

Round 6 & 7: 1 ch (1 half tr in each ch to end). Sl st to join.

Round 8 & 9: 1 ch (1 half tr in each of the next 3 chs, then 2 half tr in next ch, repeat to end). Sl st to join.

By this time you should have a round piece large enough to cover the top of your head. If it is too small, repeat round 9 once more, or until the round fits the top of your head.

Round 10 to 13: 1 ch (1 half tr in each ch to end). Sl st to join.

Rounds 14 & 15: 1 ch (1 half tr in next 5 chs, miss one ch, repeat to end). Sl st to join.

Round 16: 1 ch (1 half tr in next 4 ch, miss one ch, repeat to end). Sl st to join.

Rounds 17 to 19: 1 ch (1 half tr in each ch to end). Sl st to join.

Round 20: 1 ch (1 half tr in next 3 chs, 2 half tr in next one, repeat to end). Sl st to join.

Round 21: 1 ch (1 half tr in each ch). Sl st to join

Round 22: 1 ch (1 tr in next 3 chs, skip 1 ch, repeat to end). Sl st to join.

Rounds 23 & 24: 1 ch (1 tr in next 2 chs, skip 1 ch, repeat to end). Sl st to join.

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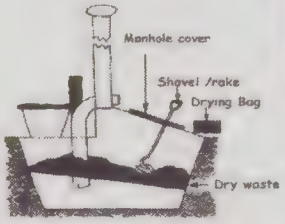

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Calving Problems

by June Birkett, Crystal Creek, NSW.

Few sights are more spellbinding than that of a newborn calf being carefully licked over by its mother. Most people think a cow has a calf and that's it, but any experienced farmer will tell you that much can go wrong during pregnancy and the calving process.

PREVENTION

A cow should be on good feed when in calf, for if poorly fed when pregnant she will often produce a weedy calf and, to use a country expression, 'a poor doer'. Keep your pregnant cows tick and fly free so parasite infestations do not pull the animals down in health. A healthy cow produces a bigger and stronger calf.

The worst scenario, however, is that a cow will have too big a calf and suffer maximum birthing problems, resulting in a back injury for the mother and death for the calf. It is far better to put a heifer cow (first pregnancy) to a small bull, such as a Jersey, Angus or Murray Grey, and have a smaller calf, than to put the first calver to a Friesian or Simmental bull.

If a cow has been on poor feed for the first four or five months of the pregnancy and is then put on lush grasses, or heavily fed with grain, this can also produce too large a calf and cause calving problems.

BEFORE CALVING

Milk Fever

A cow can sometimes go down before calving; this could be the start of milk fever caused by the drop of body calcium in the cow when a large amount of milk rushes into the udder for the calf. If not treated, the cow can die within hours. After calving this is even more critical. One very visible sign of milk fever is that the cow is usually on the ground and extremely weak, with her head turned to one side and lying on her body. Laboured breathing is an indication the situation is critical and a calcium replacer satchel should be given immediately, even perhaps two or three, depending on the cow's size, until the calcium level returns to normal and she is strong enough to stand again.

Paralysis

Occasionally, the cow can go down because a nerve in her back has paralysed her. This can happen during a long labour or with a calf that is very big. A vet can be called, but often the cow remains that way. After some days, when all has been done to no avail, the cow must be put down humanely. A common sign of this paralysis is that one of the cow's feet will club over and the cow, if lifted, cannot stand on that foot.

DURING CALVING

If the cow appears to be having difficulties, and if the bag of waters has not broken, there's a very good chance that the calf is still alive, but if the bag of waters has been broken for a long period of time and the cow is having difficulty, the calf has most often died.

'Pulling' Calves

When we have a cow with problems and it is evident that she is unable to birth the calf, we use a calving puller. It is extremely simple to use because it is shaped to place below the vulva or birth canal of the standing cow and the stick end stands against the ground.

It is best to place the pulling ropes over the feet of the calf, which are protruding from the birth canal opening. The ropes are then notched over the grooves in the stick and, as the cow pushes, the hooves are pulled by the ropes you are

A healthy cow usually produces a bigger and stronger calf, but do put small cows and heifers to smaller bulls to prevent birthing problems.

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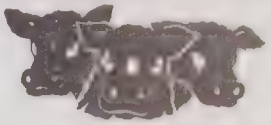

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holding. If the calf's head appears and the tongue is protruding from its mouth, it is in distress and needs to be out as quickly as possible. However, only pull on the feet, just above the hooves, when the cow pushes in labour.

If the tongue is completely out of the calf's mouth, it can mean the calf has died inside the cow. This calf needs to be expelled quickly for the sake of the cow. When the calf has been pulled, lay it alongside the cow; despite its being dead the cow will get up quicker to lick it. If the calf is taken away instantly, often the cow will not try to stand and you are never sure if she has calving paralysis or not.

AFTER THE BIRTH

When the calf is born, leave it to the cow; she needs time to lick it and to encourage it to stand and suckle. Standing around patting the calf or hindering the mother, especially if she is a heifer, will often cause the cow to walk away and that calf could have problems later because the mother might not want to suckle it.

Calves can sometimes be born with club feet from the way they lay in the womb. These calves are best destroyed because the feet usually do not straighten and you only want the best of breeding stock. Calves born blind, as sometimes happens, also should not be kept.

Calves must have colostrum from the cow for the first few days. Colostrum or first milk as it's often called, carries antibodies that confer protection from disease in the period before the calves immune system gets going. If they are kept on the mother, they are better grown calves, but if this is not possible they should be put on a good diet of milk. As soon as possible feed hay and calf pellets.

BE PREPARED

It may seem from this article that all cows have trouble calving, however, this is not the case. Being alert to possible problems means you are more likely to recognise a difficulty and be able to correct it before real loss of livestock happens. Cattle cannot join a health fund and it is expensive to call in a vet. The more animal husbandry you can learn, the less your farming costs will be. Smarter farming comes from knowledge of sound farming practices and knowing your animals. Read up on calving problems and if things go wrong you will know how to handle them.

CALCIUM REPLACER

A calcium replacer is for cows that lose massive amounts of body calcium into the milk at birth or soon after. Often, these are high producing animals and it is usually the second or subsequent calf. When this happens the cow usually collapses after birth, suffers extreme weakness and lies her head across her body. Breathing is laboured.

If she is not given the replacer, which contains calcium and magnesian solution with phosphorus and glucose, she can die within 24 hours. It can be purchased from reliable produce stores dealing with cattle.

It is administered to the cow by injection. Clean the area first with disinfectant, then insert the needle under the skin of the neck or over the rib area. One or two bags of replacer is given to the cow, depending on its size or weight. The cow usually recovers very quickly.

No-Dairy, No-Grain Muesli

by Toni Crowe, Paradise, Tas.

A diagnosis of breast cancer a little over a year ago has seen me motivated to try to achieve a healthy, natural diet, free of all processed foods. I have tried a few diets over the last year, all of which have improved my overall health and helped to clear up some other more minor health problems. But the most recent trial – the stone age or palaeolithic diet – has definitely been the most interesting! As a long-time vegetarian it was not so easy to take up eating flesh again. Yet the more articles I read about this new diet, the more logical and natural an omnivorous diet seemed, though I still believe different diets suit different people, depending on the individual's genetic make-up and other factors.

Giving up dairy products was relatively easy. There is a lot of literature linking milk and milk products with breast cancer and I didn't want to keep taking chances in this regard. The hardest part has been finding alternative meals to all those delicious grain-based vegetarian meals that I was used to, especially breakfast. I find meat – or any cooked food for that matter – hard to face first thing in the morning. After much trial and error I have come up with a delicious no-dairy, no-grain, no-meat breakfast, which I call linseed muesli. Remember that linseed needs to be added slowly to the diet over several weeks, otherwise a sudden large input will send you running to the toilet! Also, the linseed should be ground fresh every day if possible because it deteriorates quickly. I use a coffee and seed grinder that cost less than $30. I've noticed that Coles now sells certified organic linseed quite cheaply.

LINSEED MUESLI

2 – 3 tbsp linseed, freshly ground
juice of 1 – 2 apples or oranges
1 – 2 tsp psyllium husks (optional)
6 almonds or other nuts, cut in half
1 tbsp pumpkin seeds
1 tbsp sunflower seeds
3 or 4 organic dried apricots, or other dried fruit, cut into small pieces
1 banana, sliced
2 or 3 pieces of fresh fruit, in season

Mix it all together and enjoy! Obviously many of the ingredients and the amounts can be altered to suit taste or availability. The core is the ground linseed, rich in omega-3 fats, mixed with fresh fruit juice. This breakfast keeps me going for three hours of hard yakka around the farm!

Creative Mudbrick

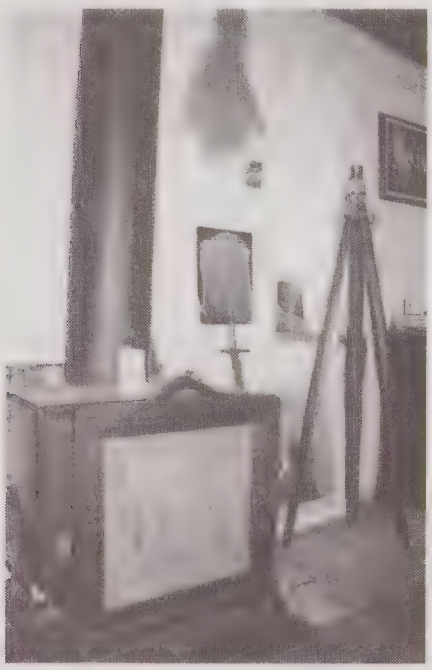
by Jacinta Armstrong, Moama, NSW.

Visual artist Keith Wiltshire survived both a business collapse and a heart attack at age 38 before buying a bush block near Myrtleford in north-eastern Victoria. He and his wife Margery, now a poet, have created and sustained their vision of an idyllic escape from the modern world of must-have.

With $20,000 to their name, Margery and Keith bought the land for $18,000 from local beekeepers who had used the land to keep their beehives. There was no water or power, but there was a vision and a commitment to creating a home. Thirteen years on, the Wiltshire family home reflects the values of 'reduce, reuse and recycle' in a unique merger of economic resourcefulness and artistic expression that Margery says 'happened because we had no money at all'.

With the leftover $2000 from the land purchase, the Wiltshires built a temporary alpine-style hut to live in,

The front of Keith and Margery Wiltshire's mudbrick home. The leadlight window was salvaged from a church and the paving bricks from an ex-army base.



The tapestry firescreen is from the 1920s and the candelabra had a previous life as a surveyor's cedar tripod.

still without water or power. They lived there for three years with their two young children Claire and Robert. During this time Margery began work on the impoverished bush soil to create garden beds, while Keith sourced ways of gathering materials for the future construction of their home.

Keith exchanged his labour for the collection of materials at the demolition of an old army camp near Albury. This supplied a water tank, windows, doors, door frames and paving bricks. He found large boulders by the roadside, and later used them in the foundations of the house. Some of the structural timber came from local sales of surplus materials and some was collected from a plantation experiment near Bright where the Wiltshires paid five dollars per tree that they cut down and then squared with a chainsaw.

Building a mudbrick house had been a long-time dream, dating from the 1970s when they had often looked through books and magazine articles on the subject. When it came time to make their own mudbricks, the dirt left over from the levelling of the house site was perfect, but water had to be carted into the site. Keith made a ten-brick mould from form ply. They loaded a car trailer with the dirt and water and trampled the mixture into mud. Then they towed the trailer into position and filled the moulds. Keith was able to produce 100 bricks alone in a single day.

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Four thousand bricks were used in the construction of the house. The internal walls were plastered with render made from loam mixed with lime and cow dung. Some of the walls were left natural, others were whitewashed and a couple were painted over with acrylic paint. Keith and Margery have tried wherever possible to use natural materials in the construction of the house to comply with their aim of having a 'water-soluble' home that they believe is healthier for them and for the environment.

Most of the floors were laid over sand bases. The living area floor was made from recycled house bricks laid on their flat in various patterns and the kitchen floor from 125 x 75-millimetre uprights from paling fences that a local fencing contractor was glad to get rid of. The slots where the rails had been were cut out, leaving blocks about 600 millimetres long. Slate picked up from the roadside was used for the wet area floors; it was embedded in a sand and cement mix and then grouted. Keith maintains that the best floor of all, and one of the cheapest, is a dirt floor. He recommends that a dirt floor should have a high clay content and be laid and smoothed while fairly sloppy. The resultant cracking when dry is then filled by pressing wet clay into the cracks.

The entire house is made of a collection of items that reflect the Wiltshire's economic resourcefulness and commitment to creativity. Keith explains that the electrical and plumbing fittings were available at a fraction of the cost because they were obsolete or shop soiled. 'We used bakelite light switches and power points, which all add to the old-fashioned charm of the house anyway.' Other recycled materials include the leadlight window salvaged from a Queensland church, the family heirloom kerosene banquet lamp from a Toorak mansion, and a crucifix sculpture made from two burnt logs that Keith dragged home from surrounding bush land. Adding to the visual intrigue inside the cool mud-brick dwelling are the couple's antique furniture that was sometimes on layby for six months before being restored by Keith; Margery's fine china collection that she discovered in bits and pieces at local and regional opportunity shops; and Keith's drawings, sculptures and forgery work.

Keith believes the house has an earthed quality that gives it a warm ambience he has not found in

Above: Margery quietly contemplates the herb garden.

Left: A collection of old wares, including an elegant kerosene lamp, is backed by a preloved leadlight window.

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MARGERY & KEITH'S TIPS

- Visit garage and clearing sales and make offers for anything you want.
- Keep your eyes and ears open for any material collecting opportunities.
- Find out if local council has hard waste collection days and go for a drive around the area on the day of the collection.
- Look in the paper or around the area for demolition jobs and make enquiries.
- Advertise labour in exchange for materials.
- Visit regional opportunity shops as often as you can.
- Make friends with local antique dealers.
- Read as much as you can at the local library.

commercially produced houses. As much as possible he has adhered to the philosophy that using natural materials is, in the long term, better for his own and the environment's wellbeing.

Beyond the walls of the house, the garden is an extension of the artistic talents of the Wiltshires. In the 1980s, Margery researched gardens of early Australian homesteads to complement the Federation house the couple then owned. Her interest in old-fashioned flowers continued with the planting of foxglove, wallflower, granny's bonnet and scabiosa (pincushion flower), all now thriving in the garden. She also planted a garden containing medicinal and culinary herbs. For both its purposefulness and its beauty, the garden has been one of Margery's long-term projects that she remains committed to.

Both Margery and Keith agree that being artists enables them to appreciate the time it takes to craft a sculpture, a poem, a garden and a home. Margery says that despite the long hours, hard work and lack of money over the years, she has always managed to remain optimistic. Living with sections of the house unfinished has at times been difficult, but Margery says that with the right attitude, a beautiful piece of fabric or scarf can cover unfinished projects until they are ready for completion.

Keith presenting a cake to Margery on her 50th birthday. Their years of hard work have resulted in a uniquely creative home that reflects their talents and personalities.

'I'm denying I'm living in this age,' says Margery. 'I don't know anyone who covers their computer with a velvet cloth or puts a jug on the kitchen bench just because it's old-fashioned. I wouldn't feel right with shiny white benches. Sometimes I think I'm from another era.'

There is certainly a feeling at the Wiltshire property that technology is not of any great significance. In one of three bedrooms, books take up the whole wall, inviting guests to sit in one of two comfortable chairs and disappear into a novel or book of poetry for a while. Modern technology was not a feature of early Australian homesteads or rural France, and it is these influences that are a large part of what gives the Wiltshires that sense of feeling right at home.

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Identify The Fly

by Beck Lowe, Heathcote, Vic.

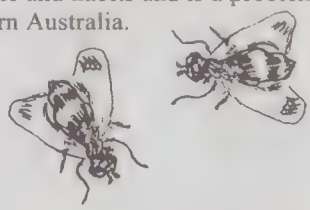
There is obviously some confusion regarding the nomenclature of the fruit fly in Australia (see 'Fight the Fruit Fly', GR 156). This is hardly surprising considering there are at least three species commonly known as 'fruit fly'. Only two of them, however, are major pests of fruit.

The Queensland fruit fly, *Dacus tryoni*, is the bane of fruit growers throughout much of eastern Australia, although Tasmania and parts of Victoria are in a fruit fly exclusion zone and remain free from the pest.

The female fly injects eggs under the skin of a very wide range of fruits, including vegetable fruits such as tomatoes. The larvae hatch and burrow further into the fruit while exuding substances that hasten its breakdown. This results in inedible fruit that is rotten internally. There is often little sign of this on the exterior, although badly damaged fruit may drop to the ground. Once the maggots reach full size they leave the fruit and burrow into the soil, where they pupate. Once the adult is fully formed it digs its way to the surface and the cycle repeats.

This lifecycle takes from five to nine weeks, depending on the weather, and a female can lay up to 200 eggs throughout her life. Consequently, with no control, numbers can build up very rapidly during the growing season, causing grief to farmers and gardeners alike.

The introduced Mediterranean fruit fly, *Ceratitis capitata*, has a similar lifestyle and habits and is a problem in Western Australia.



Drosophila melanogoster, also known as 'fruit fly', is quite a different beasty. You know the tiny orange flies that hover around the fruit bowl when the fruit is past its peak? These are drosophila. Though ubiquitous throughout Australia and the world, these flies do no harm to a ripening crop as they feed on decayed and fermented fruit. Other names they are known by are 'ferment fly' and 'vinegar fly'. Perhaps we should all make an effort to call them by one of these other names to help sort out the confusion.

As well as fermenting fruit, drosophilas are also attracted to vinegar and wine. Another common place to see them is above slow, cold compost heaps, where decaying fruit is not being burnt up quickly enough.

Drosophilas are beloved by scientists for genetic experiments because they are easy to keep and work with and have a very short lifecycle, meaning many generations can be studied in a short time. They also have another feature that is helpful to researchers – the chromosomes, or strands of genetic material, are huge, with the same sequences repeated numerous times, making active genes easy to spot.

The two types are very easy to tell apart visually, as well as by their differing habits and lifestyles. Drosophilas are tiny, only one or two millimetres long. The Queensland fruit fly is about the size of a housefly and is reddish-brown with yellow marks on its thorax (mid-section). The larvae are creamy white maggots which will 'jump' when disturbed. The Mediterranean fruit fly is smaller, although still much bigger than drosophila, and generally yellow with brown-banded wings.

Control of Queensland and Mediterranean fruit flies is covered in GR 112 and the previously mentioned GR 156. Ferment fly, though it can be annoying, is not a serious pest and can be prevented with a regular clear-out of the fruit bowl.

GET RID OF FERMENT FLIES

Those nasty little flies that hover around your fruit bowl are called ferment flies and can be controlled with a bait. Fill a jar with fruit juice and a pinch of yeast. Add a little cooking oil to float on the surface. Leave the jar in the problem area and the flies will die trying to investigate.

GREENPEACE GE-FREE FOOD CAMPAIGN

Greenpeace is running an ongoing campaign to pressure the Victorian State Government to declare a moratorium on the release of GE crops in that state in line with NSW, WA and Tasmania. At present it seems likely that GE canola crops will be planted in June this year and the oil could be in a range of foodstuffs next year. A loophole in labelling laws would enable the presence of GE canola oil to be unlabelled, so consumers would be unaware of what they were eating.

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Heritage Sheep Breeds

THE DORSET DOWN

by Megg Miller, Nagambie, Vic.

The Dorset Down could well be called the Cinderella of the British sheep breeds in Australia. It has been neglected in favour of less attractive sister breeds, numbers are now low and it is relatively unknown outside short-woolled stud circles. To survive and thrive it needs more than a slipper and a prince charming; it needs many keen devotees to keep stock and breed up numbers.

An English livestock book from the early twentieth century claimed: 'The Dorset Down is a rent-paying type, which, stocked thick on the ground, produces small mutton of the finest quality sought'. Whether the breed will pay your rent – or rates – will depend on the number kept, size of your acreage, and whether pasture can support the rapid gains well-fed lambs can make. The Dorset Down will grow quality prime lamb and produce fleece that's commercially prized for doona fill. The breed has some handy characteristics and should be high on the smallholders' breeds list.

Dorset Downs were introduced into Australia in 1937, making them a latecomer on the industry scene. They had been a highly respected breed in their home county in England for a century before this. Sheep had long proliferated in Dorset and neighbouring counties. It is reputed that in the late eighteenth century there were over 600,000 sheep in the area and more kept on the chalk hills of the south- west. In the 1820s several farmers started improving their sheep, mating the biggest bodied and best to Southdown rams. Some were called the Watercombe breed and others West County Downs. Both were mated with sheep of the Downs type, and in time these were called Dorset Down.

The Dorset Down remained largely a county sheep in England for most of the 19th century. A breed society and flock book were set up in 1906, and a handful of animals were exported to New Zealand in the 1920s and to Australia in 1937. A later importation to New Zealand replaced the first Dorset Downs, which had died out, and there are healthy numbers there today.

The Dorset Down has a clean brown face, ears and legs.

The breed never really developed a niche in Australia, which is a pity because it's hardy, extremely fertile, and a breed that grows well regardless of conditions. Fed well, its rapid growth is up with the popular prime lamb breeds.

BREED PROFILE

Dorset Downs are medium-sized short-wool sheep. They're polled (hornless) with a clean face, and wool growing around the cheeks, on the forehead and between the ears. A moderate-sized neck is set on broad shoulders, with the chest and flanks full, deep and wide. The back is level, with a well-developed covering of firm flesh; hindquarters are wide, long and amply fleshed, producing good legs of mutton.

The face, ears and legs are coloured brown, hooves are dark and the short dense fleece is white and totally free of pigmented fibre.

Temperament

They are active and alert sheep, but also docile. Their moderate size and placid temperament allows for easy management, and the more handling they get the more responsive they become. They're a top contender for smallholders with limited acreage as they will get around and graze all the paddock and are not unduly hard on fencing.

Recommended Environment

Dorset Downs are adaptable sheep that will do well in hot dry conditions, despite the fact they originate from a cold and windy part of England. A couple of studs have successfully operated in the Darling Downs district of Queensland for many years where there is an annual rainfall of 750 millimetres. The breed has also been successfully managed for decades in the dry country of central Victoria.

Although adaptable and recognised as good doers, returns are going to be better if your flock has access to good feed at joining. This maximises the chances of multiple births. Ewes feeding fast-growing lambs also need optimum nutrition to support their milk supply and their offsprings' fast growth.

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The Dorset Down ram is a good terminal sire for prime lamb production.

Fibre Character

With an average staple length of just five to eight centimetres, Dorset Down fleece is not a hand-spinning wool. Experienced spinners might be able to manage it, or use a blend containing it, but beginners would be best to start with fleece from long-woolled breeds. The fleece has characteristics typical of a Down's breed – it is short, dense, springy and full handling, with a micron range of 26 – 28. At present there is good commercial demand for Down's wool by the doona manufacturing trade, in particular from the Japanese. The only drawback with this springy wool is that a large amount is required to make up a kilo.

Carcass Production

It is in the field of carcass production that Dorset Downs come into their own, with traits like rapid growth and early maturity producing lean, high yielding carcasses. Nine years ago progeny testing trials involving 28 sires were carried out at Rutherglen Research Institute, Vic. Dorset Down rankings showed the breed ideal for producing lambs to 18 kilograms. The breed rated fourth in carcass weight and was heaviest at both weaning and marketing.

The rams are useful terminal sires in prime lamb production Farmers who have run small numbers along with other breeds found the Dorset Down met domestic lamb targets as well as export target weights. They spoke of the breed as producing good quality meat – lean with a pleasing flavour and texture – and felt what had disadvantaged the breed was the widespread dislike among wool producers of sheep with coloured points. The risk of contaminating the wool clip with pigmented fibre is of concern to most sheep farmers.

Conversely, Dorset Downs have successfully been used in Merino flocks up north to serve late cycling ewes instead of Poll Dorsets or White Suffolks. The coloured faces of the offspring enabled easy identification and facilitated an earlier drafting off than would be the case with all-white crossbred lambs.

Interestingly too, in the UK trials carried out a decade ago showed that entire male lambs were faster growing than castrated flock mates and that the early maturity resulted in a higher yield of lean meat.

Breeding

Rams are very virile and capable of servicing above average numbers and maintaining reproductive activity for several years. They will serve ewes at any time of the year, an advantage where owners want to benefit from premium prices when lamb numbers are light in the market.

Lambs of the Dorset Down breed are recognised as fast growers and part of the credit for this must go to the ewes. They are good mothers with a generous supply of milk. On reasonable pasture ewes can be expected to achieve lambing percentages of 110 – 140 percent, with a high proportion successfully reared. Lambs are small at birth, resulting in few complications or losses, and quickly get going, displaying hardiness and vigour.

In the past Dorset Down rams were used over ewe lambs because farmers could count on the lambs being small bodied as well as having a finer head and shoulders than other meat breeds.

Special Features

Although Dorset Downs are numerically low, they have retained their vigour and hardiness and would offer smallholders the satisfaction of helping the conservation efforts of Heritage Sheep Australia and the Australian Rare Breeds Trust, as well as producing a saleable fleece and wonderful prime lamb.

Association Viewpoint

As there were fewer than 300 animals registered last year, shared between three studs, one of which has recently been disbanded, the plight of the Australian Dorset Down is quite serious. Taking purebred stock on is not a light responsibility but interested readers would be most welcome. Contact Margaret Chapman, PO Box 197, New Gisborne 3438 or ph: 03-5426-2140. Email: margiechapman@hotmail.com

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Gardening To Embarrass Your Children

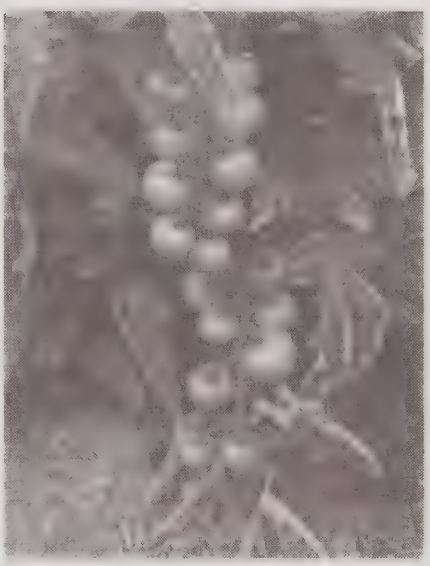
by Malcolm Menzel, Geelong, Vic.

My wife Jo and I moved to our current house in the wonderful regional centre of Geelong, Victoria, three-and-a-half years ago. We'd been married for six months after having been introduced to each other eighteen months earlier by two ladies I worked with. They knew I was single and looking for a beautiful, wealthy and single female partner. They also knew Jo and her family and when they found out Jo was looking for the male equivalent of what I was looking for, they decided to introduce us.

Well, we both missed out on the wealthy part of the equation. I'm sure I got a beautiful partner at least and we both believe we found our soul mate. The lack of wealth, together with the fact we have seven children between us, meant we could not afford a home on the acreage we wished for, so after renting for a while we put down a deposit on a largish home on a very small block.

Not only is the block little, but it boasts only a tiny backyard and the front yard is dominated by a huge gum tree. However, as I love gardening, I started making a few changes that would allow me to do so, even if on a limited scale. In the backyard I cut down a large shrub to provide enough space to grow small herbs and vegetables such as land cress, Welsh onions, parsley and lettuce. In a bare corner of the small backyard we planted Jerusalem artichokes, which we both love and are prepared to put up with the consequences of eating. In pots we have grown different types of mint, including Egyptian, Korean, basil, Vietnamese, chocolate, apple and eau de cologne.

Our house has two storeys and a sizeable balcony outside the kitchen on the upper level, a wonderful place to eat and entertain, or just to sit in the warmer weather. I put sturdy shelving around the balcony in order to support an array of plants for inclusion in the many salads and other wonderful dishes Jo cooks. It might sound as if I am being a sycophant, but she is a fantastic cook. Within easy reach of the kitchen are common mint, garlic chives, oregano, nasturtiums, thyme, rosemary, sage and many other herbs.



Influenced by *Grass Roots* and the need for more space to grow food plants, I eyed the front yard as a potential resource. Jo encouraged me with statements such as: 'I'm so lucky to have someone who likes growing plants I can use in cooking . . . our salads are wonderful . . . I wouldn't care if you dug up the front lawn to grow tomatoes'.

Pia, Jo's sixteen-year-old daughter, normally wouldn't lower herself to comment on this sort of conversation, but when I mentioned to Jo I might plant a few colourful salad vegetables in the front garden, she offered: 'You wouldn't!'

Over the last couple of years we've managed many lovely crops from the front yard. We've had borders of parsley, red oakleaf and coral lettuces and chives. The tamarillo tree gave a large crop last year. Bok choy and rocket and even a few potatoes are grown among the flowers. Last year we grew a pumpkin vine along the driveway among the roses and day lilies, but only got two pumpkins. This year we grew lettuces under the roses. At the moment we have Cos lettuces, radish, silverbeet, beetroot, horseradish, chervil, endive, Chinese broccoli and tomatoes growing.

Tomatoes are a wonderful fruit to grow in your front garden, as many people already know. They not only provide fruit, they provide a great source (excuse the pun) of embarrassment for teenagers. When I mentioned I would be planting tomatoes again this year, Pia groaned and said, 'No, you can't'. I asked her why not and she responded with: 'It looks stupid, all those ugly stakes sticking up, no one else does this sort of thing. Why can't we be normal and have just flowers instead of all those vegetables?'

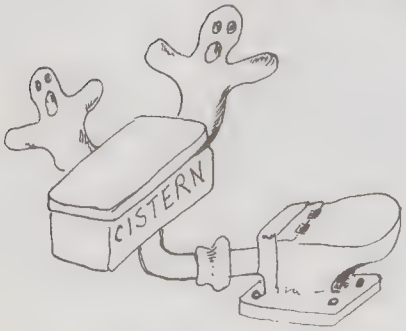
After further discussion covering the benefits of fresh, home-grown food and how parents should get lives, it became apparent Pia was embarrassed when alighting from her school bus, which happened to stop in front of our house. The tomatoes etc were a bit too unconventional to be cool. I understood her predicament and, with tongue firmly planted in my cheek, outlined my plan to take advantage of the school bus stopping outside our house. I asked Pia's opinion of nailing a sign to the gum tree – 'TOMATOES FOR SALE' – and setting up a vegetable stall in the driveway. If looks could kill.

I did plant tomatoes this year, even if I only had the support of my wife, but I compromised. In the main I planted bush tomato varieties, which required no staking, and for the few bushes that required staking I went out and bought brand new, straight tomato stakes to replace the ugly old warped stakes I've used in the past.

No need to be embarrassed now Pia, okay? Pia?

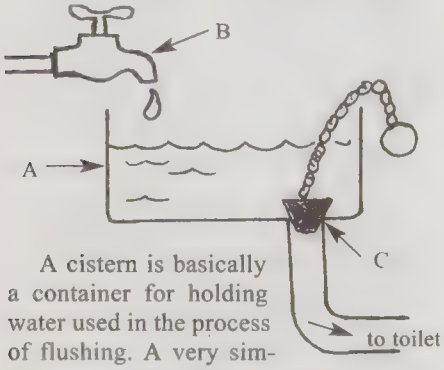
Repairing A Leaky Loo

Part 2: Within The Cistern



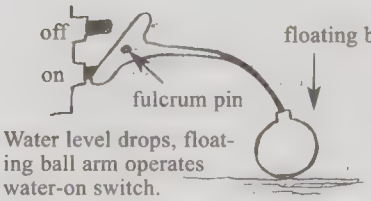
by Kel Connell, Karuah, NSW.

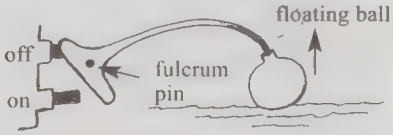
Last time I described how to fix common leakage problems emanating from outside the cistern, now let's ponder on the mysteries that exist within the cistern. Surely repairs are easier if one understands how the thing works?



A cistern is basically a container for holding water used in the process of flushing. A very simple cistern would be a container, A; a tap, B; and a plug, C; as sketched above. Of course, this is rather cumbersome and some users would forget to reseat the plug and refill the container. All toilet flushing systems are based on this working principle – it's simple

really! For convenience, some type of automation was necessary – a tap-turner-on-er and turner-off-er, and a plug-lifter-off-er and plug-put-back-er. Water flow was controlled by a simple floating valve, a rod arm and a simple on-off water valve (a lever action).

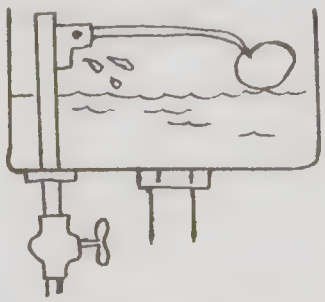




Water level rises, floating ball arm activates water-off switch.

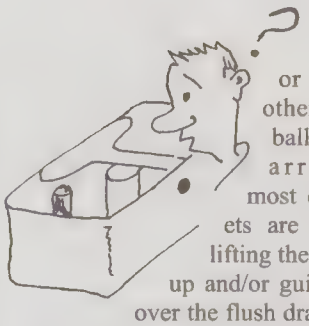
Very little can go wrong with this simple operation.

- Water inlet nozzle can become blocked.
- Floating ball arm can become fouled.
- Fulcrum pivot pin can work loose and jam arm movement.

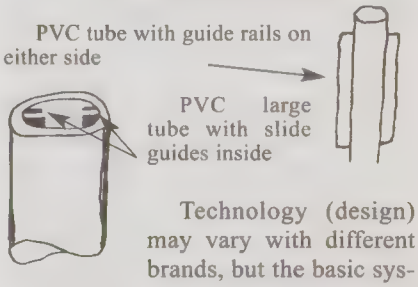


In a standard cistern the water inlet system is usually on the left and the floating ball is well to the right, where it can operate freely. All parts within a cistern are PVC, except possibly the floating ball arm, which is probably copper or brass. PVC does not rust and there are no nuts or screws to work loose. All pivot pins in moving parts are PVC self-locking split pins, the ends of which must be squeezed before they can be removed.

Don't be bamboozled by the gadgetry and rush to the fridge for comfort food



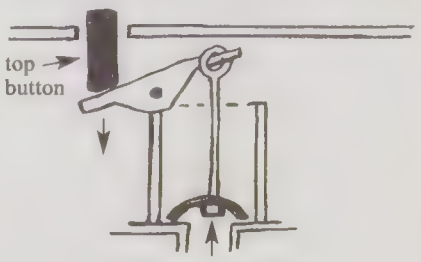
or a stubbie; other than the ball float valve arrangement most of the gadgets are involved in lifting the plug washer up and/or guiding it back over the flush drain hole.



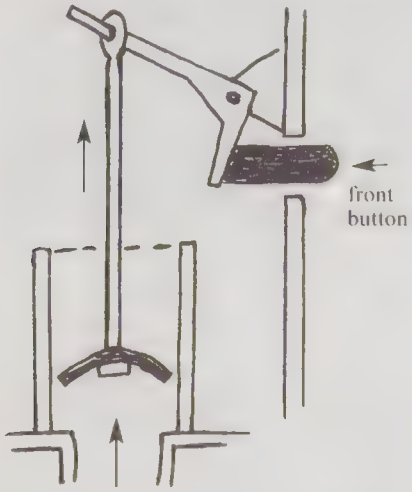
Technology (design) may vary with different brands, but the basic system is the same; to guide the flush washer back over the flush drain hole after the water turbulence caused by flushing.

'Why not use a spring?' I hear you thinking. Springs are made from high-carbon tempered steel and carbon has an affinity for oxygen, which causes oxidation, resulting in iron oxide, a fancy name for rust. Springs do not last long in water, hence the dominance of PVC.

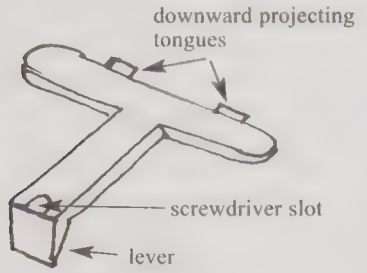
Buttons that activate the flush are either on the top or the front of the cistern. A top-operating button works a



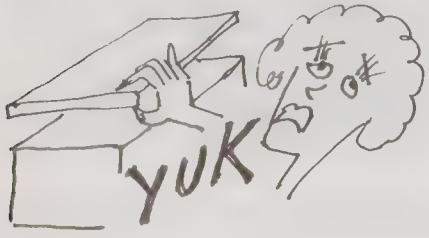
seesaw action. Button is pushed down, seesaw action lifts the flushing rubber washer. Front-operating buttons operate a lever that lifts the flushing rubber



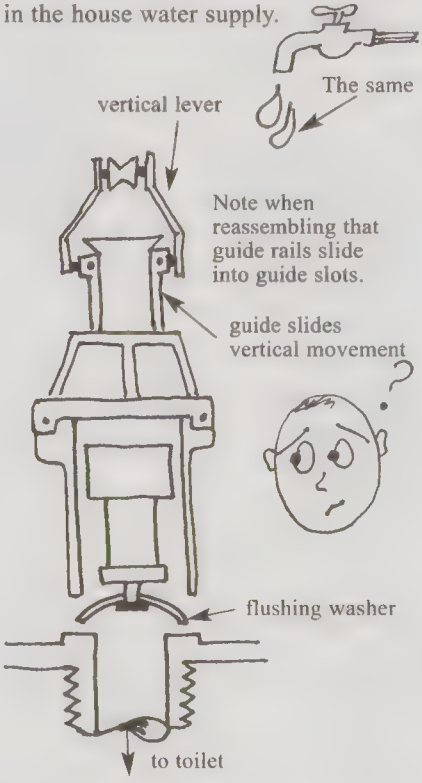
washer vertically when the button is pushed in. Should the push button or lever become fouled the flushing washer could become lodged in the open position, causing continual flushing.



The PVC wall of some front-operating cisterns is reinforced with a removable bracket to protect against rough handling. One such stiffener is a T-shaped brace with three downward projecting tongues which clip into three slots (no screws). To remove it, a narrow screwdriver is slipped into a slot provided and levered upwards. Look for an arrow and/or instructions such as 'lift'. Don't force it, PVC becomes brittle with age.



Control your imagination. Don't go getting all squirmy. The water in the cistern has not been contaminated by body wastes; it is the same water that is in the house water supply.

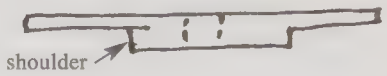


Most of the apparatus attached to the flushing washer is involved in lifting the washer and ensuring it goes back over the outlet hole. Just go straight to the bottom end and it will be seen. The thin black rubber washer fits over a shaft and is held in place with a thin plastic nut. Remove this nut and slip the washer off the shaft. Now you should have the cause of a continuous leaking flush in your hand. This washer is thin and is designed to be flexible to increase its sealing qualities. At the end of the flush a partial vacuum in the outlet pipe sucks the washer tightly over the hole, sealing it until lever action raises it on the next flush.

These cistern washers are apt to come in two or three different sizes. They are reasonably cheap. You have several options prior to commencing disassembling the cistern: Purchase the various sizes of cistern washers available, then select the right one after disassembly, discarding the others; or do the job when no one's home, so you can take the washer to the hardware

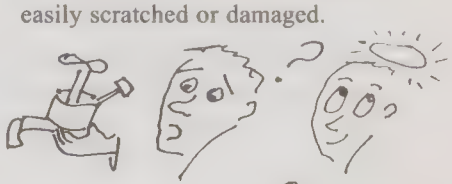
shop and compare sizes before purchasing; or do the job when everyone is home and ask them to flush with a bucket of water while you go to the hardware store! When replacing the

washer check whether it has an up and a down side. The hole in the centre is



slightly undersize, so the washer needs to be stretched to fit over the shaft. Stretching the washer as it is applied causes it to adopt a convex shape. This aids its operation, as a metal spring would.

Unfortunately, the washer's thinness and flexibility is also the reason it is easily scratched or damaged.



Reassemble in reverse order of disassembly and hopefully you won't have any parts left over. It's simple really. Happy flushing.

ROUND THE MARKET PLACE

We hope you enjoy this feature introducing new products relevant to readers' lifestyles and interests.

MOSQUITO MAGNET

The Mosquito Magnet® is an ingenious new device that can reduce local populations of biting pests such as mosquitoes, midges and sandflies without affecting beneficial insects. The device emits a plume of moist carbon dioxide, which the pests are attracted to, from LPG. The pests approach the plume and are vacuumed into a net, where they dehydrate and die. The Mosquito Magnet® can also use octenol, which increases the catch rate for certain species of mosquitoes. It takes six to eight weeks of continuous use to significantly reduce local populations of biting insects. One device can cover approximately an acre in area, making it suitable for use in public areas or large gardens where outdoor events are often held. A smaller model covers about three-quarters of an acre.

For details contact Clare Owens, 51 Jindalee Rd, Port Macquarie 2444. Ph: 1300-135-320, or 02-6581-4488.

ELMORE OIL

Elmore Oil is a mixture of four natural oils: eucalyptus, tea tree, vanilla and olive. Regular massage into areas of rheumatic or arthritic pain will enable the oils to penetrate inflamed joints and surrounding tissue and reduce inflammation. Two to three days of regular use is recommended as a fair test of the oil's efficacy. Chronic pain sufferers can rub it over the feet after showering or bathing and the pain relieving properties will be absorbed into the body. It can be used prior to playing any sport. The makers guarantee that if, after using one-quarter of a bottle, no relief is felt, the unused portion can be returned and a full refund will be made. Elmore Oil is available in two sizes: 120 ml for $11.65 and 250 ml for $19.50. It is available from relevant retail stores throughout Australia, or by post for an extra cost of $6.

For more information contact Linford's Elmore Oil, 118 Michie St, Elmore 3558, ph: 03-5432-6670.

DRÄNGEN FOR WEED CONTROL

The Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment in Tasmania has been trialling the Swedish designed and manufactured Drängen for weed control in its organic farming project. The machine is powered by a petrol engine and has narrow, adjustable rubber tracks that allow it to span crop rows or beds. It is designed to allow two people to lie on padded platforms close to the weeds to carry out hand weeding on intra-row weeds as the Drängen is driven along. The driver can also double as a weeder. A lifting frame can be mounted on the front of the Drängen to act as a tool carrier. It should give small to medium sized commercial organic operations increased efficiency.

For more information contact either Andrew Bishop or John McPhee on: 03-5462-7601.

SOLAR ROOF

New in the solar power field is Solar Roof, a product of Advanced Energy Systems. Solar Roof is a combination of the latest in photovoltaic technology with widely used roofing materials Zincalume and Colorbond. Amorphous silicon solar modules are bonded to the roofing material, allowing colour and dimensional compatibility with the chosen roofing profile and enabling once-wasted roof space to be utilised productively. Solar Roof is said to be capable of outperforming conventional products, being tolerant of low-light conditions experienced in cloudy weather and performing 20 percent higher than other systems in high temperatures. It is extremely durable, can tolerate being walked over and pelted by hailstones, is simple to install and comes in a range of colours and profiles.

For details contact Advanced Energy Systems: Nathan in Perth on 08-9470-4633, or Dan in Brisbane on 07-3341-3322.

SEA MINERAL PRODUCTS

A surprising number of minerals is needed by the body to maintain health. Minerals are important in biochemical processes, hormonal health, neurotransmission and bone strength. A range of sea mineral creams and supplements, combined with other health-promoting ingredients such as stinging nettle and pawpaw, is being promoted as having benefits for a variety of health applications from skin disorders to major diseases.

For details contact Amena's Health Care Centre, 24 Bill James Rd, Chatsworth 4570. Ph: 07-5483-1652, fax: 07-5483-1653. Or call Greg on 03-9398-0162, or 0401-652-728.

RECENT RELEASES

Titles described can be ordered through your nearest bookstore.

RECYCLE YOUR GARDEN

The Essential Guide to Composting

Tim Marshall

Any book explaining how to build a foolproof compost heap has a home at *Grass Roots*. Tim Marshall has spent 25 years in organic agriculture and is a university lecturer in horticulture. Here, he explores how composting works, outlines its multiple benefits, and shows how to build and maintain a variety of different heaps, from the straw bale type to the traditional wood frame. The source, value and use of every possible addition to your pile are discussed, as are biodynamic preparations. While there's lots of detail, some of it quite scientific, Marshall has a good 'sense of humus' and the information is clearly and simply presented, and broken up with boxes, tables and line drawings. Practical colour photos add to the text. No excuse not to get that compost cooking with this one in the bookshelf.

P/b, 112pp, ABC Books, GPO Box 9994, Sydney 2001. Ph: 1300-360-111. RRP: $27.95

MYSTIC MEDUSA'S ASTRO GUIDE

Mystic Medusa

Dubbed as astrology for the postmodern world, at first glance this book appears to be an entertaining and lighthearted look at the star signs, but is in fact remarkably accurate. Mystic Medusa doesn't mind pulling a few punches: who else would comment; 'Leave a Leo alone with a bottle of champagne and a mirror and they'll probably propose,' or dub Aries as Ramzilla? Coverage of each sign begins with a broad character outline, delineating their good and bad qualities and explaining how to motivate and manipulate them. Medusa follows this with style, career, money and home, then turns, of course, to love. Every possible astrological combination is covered, though not necessarily recommended. Last, there is a little quiz on whether you are a true Pisces etc. All in all, this book will definitely give you a good giggle, but may also leave you thinking.

P/b, 336pp, Murdoch Books, GPO Box 1203, Sydney 2001. Ph: 02-4352-7000. RRP: $19.95

NO-DIG GARDENING

How to Create an Instant Low-Maintenance Garden

Allen Gilbert

A no-dig garden uses layers of organic material placed directly on the soil to rot into a humus that is nutrient rich, water absorbing and fertile. No-dig gardening is a modern approach that improves the soil, but not at the cost of your back; who could resist the lure of a garden that can be built anywhere and promises less weeding and bending? Gilbert's book includes a step-by-step guide, with photos, to building and maintaining a bed; a comprehensive alphabetical listing of suitable plants; gardens suitable for the elderly, disabled and for children; ways to deal with pests and diseases organically; and troubleshooting for all stages and levels of expertise. The colour and black and white photos are practical and explanatory rather than unrealistically perfect. Gilbert has worked with the Victorian Department of Agriculture for 20 years and runs regular gardening workshops.

P/b, 104pp, ABC Books, GPO Box 9994, Sydney 2001. Ph: 1300-360-111. RRP: $27.95

SCENTED KITCHENS 2

Shamim Okera

Tired of lamb roast? How about something more exotic, like jeera chicken, spinach curry or green bananas in coconut? Shamim Okera grew up in East Africa and was inspired to bring the spices of her childhood to her adopted country, Australia. She explains 'the barriers of language, tradition, culture and religion only stimulated my senses and imagination'. The recipes in her cookbook certainly do likewise. The book is the result of years of testing and modifying traditional recipes, and Okera has included only the best and simplest. Prominent are recipes for curries, pulses, vegies, rice dishes and sweets, all emphasising the use of delicious flavours and spices such as fennel seeds, saffron, turmeric, rose-water, chilli and cardamom. There are more than enough vegetarian recipes to make this book worthwhile to those inclined. The book is spiral bound and is illustrated with colour photos and line drawings. The price is a GR reader special.

P/b, 152pp, Peacock Publications, 38 Sydenham Rd, Norwood 5067. Ph: 08-8362 9303. RRP: $14.95 for GR readers incl p&h.

RITUALS FOR LIFE, LOVE AND LOSS

Dorothy McRae-McMahon

People who have no affiliation to an organised religion still desire significant and appropriate ceremonies, especially these days when some of the momentous events in life can take place as though nothing special has happened. This book provides a structure for gathering up life's special moments in rituals that are meaningful and important. While Dorothy McRae-McMahon is a retired Minister of the Uniting Church, the rituals in this book are non-religious and all-embracing. They include the blessing of a home, the welcoming of a child, facing illness or death, a simple funeral, a marriage, and a meditation for forgiving yourself or someone else. The rituals are not flowery or gimmicky; the author comments: ' I have tried to prepare honest rituals which do not leap lightly into celebration or trite solutions or statements'. The simplicity, the sense of community, the moments of silence and the universal symbols utilised make these rituals very moving.

P/b, 166pp, Jane Curry Publishing, 220a Glenmore Rd, Paddington 2021. Ph: 02-9356-3922. RRP: 24.50

DOWN HOME ON THE FARM

by Megg Miller.

'Stay the night', Suni urges whenever I visit her in Melbourne, while friends admonish, 'You can't drive home at this hour'. I do, even if it means a little power nap on the side of the road, otherwise the fox might have goose head for entrée. A wistful assembly of old cats and dog are usually sitting at the gate, pleased I've deigned to return. If you have animals there are always jobs to be done and I think twice about having an evening away because that's always when trouble strikes.

A recent incident really brought this home. I got back at a moderate hour, opened the gate and drove in. It's handy to use the car lights to illuminate the gate to the goose paddock and as I walked back to the vehicle after opening it I was puzzled by the inactivity and silence of the birds. Usually, they surge through the gate with much noise and raising of dust. Golly, I thought, peering into the darkness, are those grey shapes on the ground dead geese? Walking towards them, I was suddenly halted when one jumped up and started barking. There were two stray dogs enjoying an evening reverie. 'Get outa there', I snarled, and they took off as though shot. The bigger of the two leapt over the back fence, but a Jack Russell had disappeared in the dark. I realised he would be in one of the chook yards and went in and walked about, shouting and striking the weeds growing in them with a stick. Thank God there are no immediate neighbours and those living closest don't have the best hearing. The poor dog must have thought the devil was after him and preferred to stay put and risk unconsciousness. Remembering that the car was still idling round near the goose paddock gate, I relinquished the witch hunt and went back to the original task.

Later, just when I'd got the geese through the gate and nervously heading to their night yard, the little dog ran past us all. Geese, dog and of course yours truly, shrieked. The commotion reverberated through the still night. I was hopping mad by this time and took off after it again. Fortunately, it had the sense to disappear into the shadows. What a night! I was exhausted, the car was still down the drive and dear old Maria the Maremma had sat near the house gate, uninterested and unconcerned by it all. She was waiting for her dinner!

The little dog woke me in the morning, barking near the bedroom window. Later I saw it chase some chooks and roared disapprovingly at it. Having lived in a rural area for years, I've watched and listened to the locals with their dogs. An instruction or reproof has to sound deep and ugly if it's to work. 'Git on home', I yelled. The dog ran.

Realising this mutt couldn't find its way out of my place, I opened a gate and walked away. Out it shot, to be joined by its larger companion, who must have been lurking out the back. They took off across the paddock, a rare sight I can tell you, short and tall trotting along as though late for an appointment. No doubt they were from one of the surrounding farms as they were well cared for and wearing collars, but what if they had fancied a fracas and felled the geese? I'm sure Maria would have acted if the feathers had begun flying, but it pressed home the point that you need to be around when you keep stock.

For nearly 30 years I've fed and watered poultry daily and locked them up at night. You could imagine I'd be sick of them by now, or of rural responsibilities. Like many GR readers, I still like the same familiar down-to-earth activities. I'd rather feed and water chooks or garden energetically than go to the gym or jog. Surprisingly, I still like poultry, although smaller numbers hold greater appeal for me now.

I've been edging towards a change in lifestyle for several years. The isolation and quiet I currently enjoy are fantastic. The continual worry about water isn't. The rain will probably come one day and no doubt we will be blessed with several wet seasons, complete with run-off and local flooding filling the dam again. At present, however, gum saplings are growing in it

A chair at the cottage waiting for Megg.

and it's been dry so long that they're nearly a metre high. In a moment of unusual spontaneity I bought an acre and a half in a country town several years ago. It looked to have room for livestock and an ambitious garden, and it had town water connected. Right, I thought, I'll take it. No architect inspection of the modest old cottage and no enquiry to council of the by-laws allowing poultry.

The cottage has been hungrier than the tax department when it comes to dollars. Fix up one problem and another appears. When the rain bucketed down not long ago the new guttering overflowed and water came under the back door into the house. It poured down the chimney too. The roof and guttering I thought were right, but no; more to do, more to spend.

Not long ago I had an electric stove installed in the cottage, a smart new

one. Each time I visit and enter the kitchen I admire it from afar. I'm sure I've seen turkeys react similarly to newly introduced buckets or feeders. They hunch their shoulders and stretch out their necks, eyeing the offending item suspiciously. Sometimes they mutter indecipherably. I suspect I do the turkey bit very well. I've read the instructions. I've read the instructions to Mary's new stove as well, a completely different model. My experience has been with wood stoves and microwaves, how on earth do I work this flash new monster? 'So when are you going to move?' friends enquire. 'When the sun rises in the west', was my most recent reply. It's not time yet, I'm not ready and there is much still to do on the block. As well, there's the matter of geese to be sold and chooks and roosters dispersed. Hopefully, some will accompany me, but only a chosen few.

If that's not a handful to wrestle with, Suni and Marcel have recently moved house. It's been very trying and stressful, but finally papers were signed and their meagre belongings relocated. 'How is it?' I said, phoning up Suni. 'Are you happy? I thought I might pop down and have a look after work.' 'How wonderful darling', she cooed. 'Are you bringing the champers?' 'Um', I answered hesitantly, searching my mind for a decent excuse. After all, I don't drink. 'Not yet', I parried. 'It would be spoilt by drinking from coffee cups'. 'Don't worry darls, the last things I packed were the champagne glasses and they were the first unpacked.' We all sat on the mattress on the floor and toasted new beginnings

Pablo was rather disturbed by the move to a new place. Luckily the couch is familiar.

with our separate brews, entertained by the fugitive-like behaviour of poor Pablo the cat. Messages left in the corners of the room sent him scurrying for cover. Would this be ahead of me too with my elderly cats? Pablo is used to the confines of the house, whereas my two have spent most of their time in sheds. Kitty litter and inside trays are as foreign to them as hunting prey in the feed shed is to Pablo.

So, there are exciting times ahead and what's most pleasing of all is the opportunity to grow more of the fruit trees or vegie varieties that are mentioned in Feedback or GR articles. A reliable water supply is everything. When the current bills are paid up and behind me, I can invest in several tanks to catch the roof run-off and know there is water on hand for emergencies. Mulch is essential for water conservation too, and I never miss an opportunity to collect it; in fact there are a few bags of sheepy straw waiting to be put on the garden now. And have I mentioned the bags I fill and bring from home for the garden? No – that's for next time, my back's killing me from today's ambitious efforts.

PENPALS

Hi! My name is TjL and I'm a nearly-14-year-old girl. I'd like guy and girl penpals. I don't really care how old you are. My interests are drawing, reading mags, listening to music, shopping, receiving letters, writing them, plus more. I don't go to a school; I do home schooling. So if you'd like to be my penpal please write to me and send some recent photos of yourself too if possible.

TjL (GR157),
C/- PO Box 117, Seymour 3661.

I'm a young single man (24) living in a Christian community in Tasmania. I'm seeking penpals interested in traditional family values, gardening, fishing, and a clean life in the country.

Joshua Morris,
C/- Post Office, Glendevie 7109.
Email: patriarchs@hotmail.com

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Use the form provided below, or a separate sheet of paper, to print your advertisement clearly, **not in block capitals**, including correct punctuation. If you have more than one ad please print each one on a separate page. Remember to include an address or phone number in your advertisement. Count the number of words and multiply by 85 cents per word (phone number counted as one word) to work out the total cost of your advertisement. Send **with payment** to Grass Roots, PO Box 117, Seymour 3661, before the deadline and we'll include your advertisement in the next issue of Grass Roots. **Deadline for GR 158 is 25 June, 2003.** Please do not fax ads.

Sender's Name ..... For issues no/s .....

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Cost for advertisements is 85c per word

PROPERTY FOR SALE

NEW SOUTH WALES

NORTHERN NSW 3 b/rs, 10 ac, handy to Lismore & coast. Ph: 02-6629-8584. Details & photos: www.privatesale.com.au/01767

JACKADGERY, 485 ac of beautiful natural forest, hills, valleys & streams, 35 km from Grafton. $210,000. Ph: 08-8987-3440.

TENTERFIELD, 19 ha (47 ac), bush retreat, handy to nat pk, perm water, cosy granite cabin, sheds, dozer, truck, Australiana & furniture. $110,000. 277 Rouse St, TENTERFIELD 2372. Ph: agent, 02-6736-3377.

NORTHERN NSW, TOONUMBAR, 35 km west of Kyogle, 1/6 share in 546 ac, company title, bordering nat pk, r/forest & perm crk. Council approved cabin (solar power, new gas oven) on 5 ac site. Shed, tank, piped dam & spring water. $37,500 ONO. Ph: Bec, 02-6632-3423.

BYRON BAY/CABARITA BEACH HINTERLAND, 7 secluded ac 10 mins beach, cert organic, 70 mango trees, nat bush, mega water. Reduced $395,000. Ph: 02-6677-7387.

BYRON SHIRE, SOUTH GOLDEN BEACH. Six yr old early 1900 style Australiana cottage. Two b/rs, sleepout, lge open space lounge-dining-kitchen, with extra food preparation room with walk-in pantry. Wide verandahs, with hand-split posts & rail, logs round windows & main entry. Concrete floored outbuilding, laundry attached & toilet, fitted out with stovette, sink, fridge, shower & table & stools (ex-lapidary w/shop). A 12 m x 3.3 m x 2.7 m c/van & car shed, + roofed outdoor living area with fuel stove, sink & tile-topped table. $395,000. Ph: 02-6680-4212.

GEORGICA, attractive 3 b/r mudbrick house on 1/6 share of 47 ac. Great water (rain & bore & share of dam). Mains & solar power. Beautiful views, privacy, bushy surrounds & wildlife, yet only 25 mins to Lismore. Spacious open plan house. Primary school 10 mins, bus. $128,000. Contact agent, Jackie Purdie, 02-6621-2387. Pictures at www.ljhooker.com.au/lismore

FIFTEEN-ACRE BUSH BLOCK, Canberra 45 mins, Bungendore 15 mins. Fenced, sheltered, lge dam. Approved temporary accom, fully furnished + 2 lge sheds & c/van. Pump & water system to garden & f/trees. Ph connected, power avail. $105,000. Ph: owner, John, 0417-296-800.

FAR SOUTH COAST: Mount Darragh, 120 ac bush block with two 10 ac clearings. Livable shed with ph, running crk, 45 mins to Pambula beach. $90,000. Ph: Steve on 03-5476-2238.

QUEENSLAND

WIVENHOE QLD: older Queenslander set on 100 ac of hilly natural bushland backing onto state forest. Dam & ample water storage, generator power. Stanley range & pot belly stove. Brisbane 1¼ hrs, Fernvale 15 mins. $150,000. Ph: 07-3366-0547.

CRABS, PRAWNS, FISH, 2 adjoining houses + tropical food forest property on beautiful Russell Island. Hundreds of pineapples, bananas, pawpaws etc. Only 1 hr Brisbane. Excellent investment & income potential. Includes 21 ft catamaran & workshop. Offers around 200K. Ph: 0439-705-497.

NEXT TO MOUNT WALSH Nat Pk, 10 ac share in community under company title, 3 b/r house, newly painted throughout, bathroom, inside & outside WC, laundry, septic, 24V & 12V solar system, gas for water & stove, ph, 7000 gal of filtered water for house, 5000 gal for garden. Some bearing f/trees. $70,000 ONO (includes $10,000 for company share). Ph: 07-4129-9086.

NANANGO, lovely 5 ac, fully fenced, lge dam, lots of trees, bitumen rd frontage. $23,000. Ph: 08-8987-3440.

BIGGENDEN, 10 lovely ac, seasonal crk, lge dam, fully fenced, wonderful views, bitumen rd frontage. $33,000. Ph: 08-8987-3440.

BOWEN, BEST OF BUSH AND BEACH, panoramic views, 7½ fertile ac (deceased estate), ex-organic fruit, vegetable, cut flower farm, 2 dams, 2 bores, coldroom, 3-bay shed, 2 unique, eccentric & beautiful dwellings. Ph: 07-4785-2456, mobile: 0403-337-729.

BURRUM HEADS, nicely timbered 14 ac block, fenced, good soil, ph & power avail. Situated on sealed main rd 20 mins form Hervey Bay & Maryborough & 3 km to Burrum Heads village & beach. $75,000. Ph: 02-4722-3344.

GRASSIFIEDS

PROPERTY FOR SALE

QUEENSLAND

TOWNSVILLE AREA, 50 km west, 20 ac, lge dam & bores, 200 mango trees & orchard. Partly completed home & 2 outhouses. Ph & power. Ph: 07-4778-8628.

FINCH HATTON GORGE, near Mackay, Qld. Ten ac beautiful, virgin, unspoilt r/forest. Permanent crystal clear crk that tumbles ca 100 m down as a gradual waterfall into a big swimming hole. Unspoilt, beautiful & private. $95,000. Ph: Peggy, 07-5463-6233. Email: sliprail@dodo.com.au

ELEVEN KILOMETRES PAST RATHDOWNEY towards Lake Maroon, Qld, near-new, beautiful 2 b/r home, all timber inside, verandah back & front, modern kitchen & bathroom, laundry, air con reverse cycle, 6¾ ac fertile natural soil. 400 m constant dam-fed crk with pump & water licence, 12,000 gal water tanks, double garage with c/port, 2 of 3 x 3 stables, property fully fenced parted in 5 paddocks, exotic f/tree orchards, organic vegie garden, 7 water taps. Beaudesert 41 km, Gold Coast 100 km. Breathtaking mountains & Lake Maroon for fishing & swimming. $185,000. Ph: 07-5463-6233. Email: sliprail@dodo.com.au

TWENTY-FIVE MINUTES FROM ROCKHAMPTON, 6 ac, spacious home, 4 b/rs, office, cattle yard, chicken run, tractor, implements, plentiful water, irrigation, sheds, gardens, perfect alternative lifestyle. $79,000. Ph: 07-4933-1148.

THIRTY MINUTES FROM KINGAROY, 40 ac with 3 b/r modern brick house, solar hot water, power, ph, 3 dams & lots more. Part cleared for small crops or cattle. Don't miss the chance to enjoy good country living. $80,000 ONO. Owner must sell. Ph: 07-4162-7698.

ON ENVIRONMENT PROPERTY OF 1300 ACRES: 2 – 3 b/r cabin, solar, excel water, sheds, 10 ac. $59,000 WIWO. Also 3 b/r Queenslander, tanks, sheds, 10 ac. $70,000. Both with shares in environment reserve adjoining Mt Walsh Nat Pk. Ph: Ian, 07-4129-9111. Email: bern33@bigpond.com

HOUSE ON TWELVE ACRES, 25 mins nth of Childers, 3 b/r cottage, 9 x 12 rumpus area, also original rustic shed with lge work area, undulating land with good soil, 500 gph bore with good quality water, sml stock dam, close to hwy, school bus to front gate, great private position. $99,000. Ph: 07-4157-6327.

WOODFORD: 4 b/r Queenslander on 21 ac, perm water, 1 ha persimmons (Fuyu) under hail net. Views to Glasshouse Mountains. $265,000. Ph: 02-6683-1778

CHANGE OF ADDRESS
Please notify us of any change of contact details so we can redirect enquires. Call us on 03-5792-4000.

DEADLINES: GR 158 – JUNE 25
GR 159 – AUGUST 25

BEAUTIFUL FIVE-ACRE BUSH BLOCK, 25 mins from Bundaberg. $32,000 ONO. Ph: Michael, 02-6689-5122 AH only.

INGHAM HALF-HOUR AWAY, 87 ac natural bushland, mobile home, primary school. Vendor finance avail. $95,000. Ph: 0427-189-910.

VICTORIA

CENTRAL VICTORIA – WEDDERBURN: 'Singing Tree' – A wonderful lifestyle in a lovely setting, fully self-suff. Stylish & uniquely beautiful mudbrick house featuring rich & solid timberwork & lge windows – passive solar heated. Twenty-two ac, full solar power, 2 huge dams, huge shed, double c/port, permaculture home orchard, landscaped garden with frog pond. A truly special place. $275,000. Ph: owner, 03-5494-3675, agent, 03-9894-3799.

FIVE-ACRE BUSH BLOCK at Carapooee, bounded by picturesque crk & forest. $20,000. 75 Lyttleton St, CASTLEMAINE 3450. Ph: 03-5472-5178.

TASMANIA

NINE-ACRE BUSH BLOCK, 35 mins from Hobart. Driveway, house site cleared, power on boundary. $27,500. Contact Elliot on: 03-6259-3050.

NORTH-WEST COAST, CAMENA, 32 ac, private, valley & river views, 38 sq mudbrick & macrocarpa home, 4 b/rs, 2 bathrooms, 2 WCs, gas cooking, open plan kitchen & dining, lge covered deck, 2-car c/port, 10 sq w/shop with 2-car c/port, 400 m river frontage, 15 ac dry sclerophyll forest, balance seeded regrowth. Potential is bounded only by your imagination. Reluctant sale. $210,000. Ph: 03-6436-2265, or 0408-927-501.

WATERCRESS VALLEY, PENGUIN, NW Tas, 53 ac beautiful hideaway 30 mins to 'Spirit' terminal/airports. Two titles, old comfortable family farmhouse, 4 – 5 b/rs, paddocks, blackwood plantation, formerly micro market garden, ***+AAA self-cont cabin accom. Children grown up so we've reluctantly moved to conventional farm. $250,000. Ph: 03-6429-3259. www.users.bigpond.com/judith.walker/wv_web.html

GOLCONDA, Tas, beautiful home, Lone Star Rd. In an environmentally friendly valley (home of the Tasmanian circus festival) with neighbouring properties & still private. Fifty ac, pasture, bush, 3 dams (trout) + platypus. Mudbrick/tiles/2 storey, 3 b/r & study, laundry, bathroom, sep toilet, lge living area, cellar, ph, solar & battery bank, combustion stove, sheds, f/trees, blackwoods, sunny northern aspect. Two rooms need minor finishing touches. Expressions of interest: Ph: Steve, 0417-541-075.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

LAKE BENNETT, 102.3 ha, Darwin CBD 78 km, natural bush, monsoon forest, scenic hilltop views, fertile flats, power/ph at boundary. $120,000. Ph: 08-8988-4723.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

PARILLA, 35 ac, fenced, 3 b/r cottage, sheds, bore, windmill, excel water & soil. Over 30 fruit/nut trees. Work available locally. $60,000 ONO. Ph: 08-8537-3417.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

BUSSELTON, 34 ac bushed block. Close to beaches, school, shops, yet very peaceful. $198,500. Ph: 0428-546-648. Website: www.Owner.com.au Property #4017.

SITUATED 130 KILOMETRES EAST OF MEEKATHARRA, 53 km west of Wiluna on Goldfields Hwy, 327 ha suitable citrus, olives, grapes etc. Plentiful water supply. Native title exempt. Comfortable rammed earth, 4 b/r home, ample living spaces, fully air-conditioned. Outbuildings: 40' x 20' w/shop, engine room, airstrip. Other equip sold with property incl mechanical equip, vehicles. $120,000 ONO. Contact Ray Dear: 08-9981-2975.

FIJI

SUVA, freehold block in popular Laucala Beach Estate. $40,000. Ph: 08-8953-2163.

PROPERTY WANTED

THREE – FIVE ACRES within 2 hrs of Melbourne with 2 – 3 b/r house. Ph: 03-9480-0228.

FOR SALE

GRASS ROOTS 'EARLY YEARS', 11 – 149 (not 128), *Vegie Gardener's Companion*, *Bumper Book*, *Fireside Reader* plus *Earth Garden* – 37 issues. $480 + freight. Ph: 03-5786-5121 AH, 0403-303-486 mobile.

SOLAR BATTERIES x 2, Trojan. 130A/hr. As-new. Receipts. Cost $625, sell $525 or offer. Ph: 03-9397-7937.

NEW PLASTIC TREE GUARDS, 560 mm high x 400 mm wide, UV stabilised, boxes of 330, $30 + freight; or 10c each + freight. Two x AGA stoves, 1 oil fired. Best offers. Ph: 0427-254-319.

WANTED TO RENT/CARETAKE

HOUSESITTER AVAILABLE FROM JULY. Mature age, n/s, n/d, loves gardens, animals. NSW or Vic. Refs avail. Contact: 02-6887-3482 leave message.

All ads on these pages are accepted at the discretion of the publishers

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WANTED TO RENT/CARETAKE

COUPLE, EARLY FIFTIES, seeking rental-caretake situation NSW northern rivers – Mullumbimbi, Bangalow, Lismore to Woodburn area. Alternative minded, keen organic gardeners, maintenance, carpentry & caretaking experience. Many joint skills. Earn living from coastal markets. Have chooks & sml terrier. Conscientious & reliable. References. Consider MO/no drugs! Ph: Tim & Jaya, 02-6636-2338.

FOR RENT/CARETAKER WANTED

ORGANIC CATTLE STATION in Central Qld seeks couple for handyman & organic gardening, approx 3 to 4 months work. Replies to: 07-4985-5106.

OPPORTUNITIES

UNIQUE PORTABLE TIMBERMILL, can be towed by 4WD or sml truck. Horizontal band saw cuts logs 1 m diameter by 5.5 m long into slabs – veneer or scantlings. Ideal timber-furniture worker or community. $20,000, or consider exchange property or community shares + $10,000. Write: Bill Dijkmans, 33 Tenth Ave, RAYMOND ISLAND, Vic 3880.

EARN MONEY FROM HOME. Work smarter not harder. Call 02-8230-0913 (24 hrs), or visit: www.hereisyoursuccess.com

MATURE SINGLE PERSON wanted to care for birds in return for c/van with shower & toilet in annexe, ph connection & c/port. Water avail for gardening etc. For more info ring 07-4995-8452.

FREE short- or long-term accom offered in a southern Flinders Ranges township, in exchange for helping estab a permaculture property of 4 ac. For particulars ph: 08-8667-5323, or email: wilmington1@bigpond.com

OPPORTUNITY FOR A FUTURE in community/work/life, suit homeless/parentless 18 to 23 yr old. Offering clean, modest, separate living quarters on rural residential property, organic foods, in caring home environment. Genuine person in need & desire for a head start call: 07-5485-2022 or write to: 'Headstart', C/- Arnaud, PO Box 123, EUDLO 4554.

LITTLE PROMISED LAND COMMUNITY (Tas): See 'Little Promised Land' ad in Communities/Shares section.

BUSINESS FOR SALE

ORGANIC VEGIE CAFE incl 2 outlets, wholesale & catering on Sydney's northern beaches, to swap for property up north. Minimum 50 ac, eco-friendly & water access. All offers considered. Call Naomi on 02-9970-6113. Alternatively, for sale at $135,000.

PLACING AN AD?
See page 76 for details

COMMUNITIES/SHARES

LITTLE PROMISED LAND COMMUNITY (TAS): We are a small group of Christian believers who are keen to live by the laws & commandments of God, & to base our lives on an attitude of forgiveness & brotherly love. This world has become very hostile to the virtues of courtship, true love & marriage as God demands it. We read in the Bible that God is seeking a people who will obey Him & live harmoniously together. We view our time on earth as an apprenticeship. We are told the Judgement of all who dwell on earth will eventually come, suddenly. We regard community, therefore, as a place to apply our faith in readiness for the end of this age, when the earth will be cleansed by fire & those who have been counted worthy shall enter into this earth made new, like Eden. In the meantime, we do our best to survive the difficult times to come. We are in the process right now of getting away from being 'shopping trolley drivers', to a more practical & sustainable way of life. It is hard work & we are still in the pioneer stage of developing our 200 ac property. We are not on a recruitment drive, but are simply making our intentions known openly, so as those who are desiring to 'be separate' from the world & are seeking a 'Little Promised Land' may make enquiry. You are welcome to contact us by mail: GPO Box 1926, HOBART, Tas 7001, or by ph: 03-6297-6134, or email: littlepromisedland@hotmail.com

PUBLICATIONS

'HEALTH & HAPPINESS' – a book about disease prevention, diet & lifestyle, faith & healing, spirituality & mind cure, family wellbeing. For your copy send 7 x 50 c stamps with your address to: Health & Happiness, PO Box 27, ADELONG 2729.

'NATURAL PARENTING' magazine, is a new Australian magazine providing a practical alternative perspective on everyday issues experienced by families and prospective parents. To subscribe ph: 07-3355-1333, or visit: www.naturalparenting.com.au

'STEPPING STONES FOR HOME EDUCATORS' is an excellent 40 page quarterly designed to inform & inspire homeschoolers across Australia. Published since 1995. $8 single, $30 for 4 to: Grace Chapman, MS 1877, MALANDA, Qld 4885.

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YOU CAN MAKE YOUR OWN MOISTURISERS, hand & body lotions, cleansers & more with the Naturally Better Skin Care Kit. All natural ingredients, no animal products, no special equipment needed. Kit contains instruction book with over 30 recipes, ingredient explanations & natural preservatives. Also contains quality ingredients to make your own moisturisers & stylish jar. Send $49.95 (inc GST) + $7.95 p&h cheque/money order to: Skin Affair, PO Box 604, NIDDRIE DC 3042.

ENID GILCHRIST pattern books for sale, for child – birth to 9 yrs. Ph: 03-9807-4160.

'BUSHTUCKER IN YOUR BACKYARD' – A guide to growing over 50 Australian native vegetable plants. Includes 3 pkts of seed. Send $25 to: PO Box 224, BLACK ROCK 3193. www.expage.com/bushfood

HOMESCHOOLING? The book, *A Steiner Homeschool?* contains advice on creativity, bureaucracy, discipline, programming, curriculum and more. Send $14 (Visa/Mast, cheque, money order) to: Alan Whitehead, Box 329, BLACKHEATH 2785.
www.users.bigpond.com/goldenbeetlebooks/

BOOKS, NEW AND OLD. Australiana, lifestyle, Pacific, biography, horticulture, gardening, outdoors. Lists avail. BA & JM Wallace, Box 325, PORTLAND 3305.

HOME EDUCATION, for info send SAE to: Alternative Education Resource Group, PO Box 461, DAYLESFORD 3460.

'NIMBIN NEWS MAGAZINE', is a cooperatively run access magazine with articles & information from Nimbin and other areas. We cover concerns relevant to alternative lifestylers & others looking for the most sustainable way. We are one of the longest running alternative magazines & the Nimbin bioregion is at the forefront in the development of sustainable systems. As networkers we scan many mags for suitable & scarce information for our readers. Subscription: 6 issues for $20, sample $3.50. Back copies 5 for $12 posted. PO Box 209, NIMBIN 2480.

'NATIVE STINGLESS BEES' for profit or pleasure – how to get started, pollination/honey potential in Qld. Detailed info booklets, packed with photographs, diagrams. For free catalogue, send name, address & 50 c stamp to: ANBRC, Box 74-G4, NORTH RICHMOND, NSW 2754.

'NEW VEGETARIAN & NATURAL HEALTH', the magazine of the Natural Health & Vegetarian societies. Subscribe today, $30 yearly, and receive: 4 vital magazines, discounts at participating health food stores and natural therapies practitioners listed in magazine. Head Office, 28/541 High St, PENRITH, NSW 2750. Ph: 02-4721-5068.

FOOD & KITCHEN

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FOOD & KITCHEN

HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS. Interested in looking after the environment? Use environmentally friendly household products. Contact Phil on 0421-834-315, or Katrina on 0421-656-544.

HOME STONE FLOUR MILLS – mill your own stoneground wholemeal flour for cakes and bread at home with a Retsel Little Ark stone flour mill. Endorsed by Housewives Association. Write for catalogue to: Retsel Distributors, PO Box 712, DANDENONG 3175, encl 3 postage stamps. Ph: 03-9795-2725. Distributor enquiries welcome. Website: www.retsel.com.au

STONE GROUND FLOUR in-home, with a SCHNITZER German quality hand or electric stone mill, 6 models from $178. SCHNITZER MILLS, 420 Freemantle Rd, Bathurst 2795. Ph: 02-6336-9100, www.schnitzer.com.au

MISCELLANEOUS

TEEPEES, VIKING TENTS, medieval tents, swags, buckskin clothing. Seventeen years experience. BOJO Products, PO Box 112, AVENEL 3664. Ph: 0412-368-034, 03-5796-2753 AH. Email: bojo_products@hotmail.com Website: www.frojel.com/members/bojo

BIODIESEL: How to save lots of money making your own alternative fuel, suitable for cars, trucks, tractors, buses etc. For info call Glenn on 0419-446-646.

HOW TO MAKE MONEY selling & making chess pieces, bird baths, fine art, gnomes etc. Plaster and/or cement moulds. For methods & catalogue send $14.95 to: Williams Imports, PO Box 989, SOUTHPORT 4215 (06/50 Railway St). Ph/fax: 07-5532-9050. Website: www.supermoulds.com.au

LITTLE PROMISED LAND COMMUNITY (Tas): See 'Little Promised Land' ad in Communities/Shares section.

HEALTH & BEAUTY

LACTOSE INTOLERANT, VEGETARIAN, or just health conscious? Then try www.vegano.com.au or call 1800-834-266 for free brochure & your chance to WIN goodies!

GARDEN & ORCHARD

BOB MAGNUS'S FRUIT TREES: Please send 3 x 50 c stamps for my 2003 list of: dwarf apple trees, apricots, plums, nectarines, pears, quinces, cherries, crab apples & hazel nuts. Bob Magnus, WOODBRIDGE, Tas 7162.

COST OF ADS

Cost of Grassified ads does not include any extra formatting: extra bold text, indents, spaces, stars or other symbols. If you require an ad with formatting please enquire about our display advertising rates. Call Sue on 03-5792-4000.

DEADLINES: GR 158 – JUNE 25
GR 159 – AUGUST 25

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PERMACULTURE DESIGN COURSES with Rick & Naomi Coleman, Southern Cross Permaculture Institute. Next course 14 – 29 November 2003. Call Naomi: 03-5664-3301 for info or email: scpi@tpg.com.au Website: www.southerncrosspermaculture.com.au

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CALENDAR EVENTS

WORLD PEACE AND PRAYER DAY – all nations – all faiths – one prayer. Special international three-day Peace Gathering with the traditional Elders of Gariwerd, Chief Arvol Looking Horse & other indigenous elders & peace leaders from across the world! 21 – 23 June at Brambuk Aboriginal Cultural Centre, The Grampians (Gariwerd) Halls Gap, Victoria. World Peace & Prayer Day 2003, PO Box 160, WARRANDYTE 3113. Ph: 03-9844-5379, fax: 03-9844-1277.
Email: wppd2003@ozemail.com.au
Website: www.worldpeaceandprayerday.org

PLACING AN AD?
See page 76 for details

2003 AUSTRALIAN SHEEP & WOOL SHOW, 18 – 20 July, 2003, Prince of Wales Showgrounds, Bendigo. Further enquiries contact: Andrew Ternouth, PO Box 219, BENDIGO. Ph: 03-5439-5094, fax: 03-5439-3801. Email: atern@bendigo.net.au

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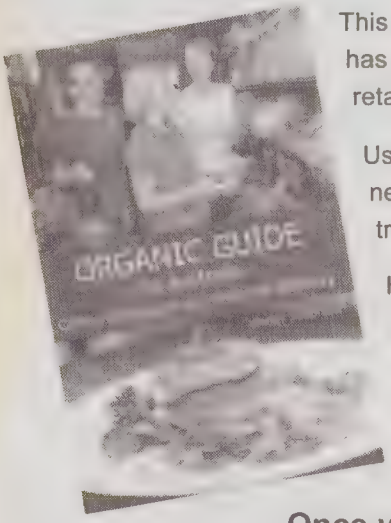

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Author, Wendy Seabrook, has had a life-long passion for the environment. She has researched cane toads, green turtles and feral cats, runs an organic farm and promotes organic agriculture.

Once you start using this guide, you'll wonder how you lived without it!

See page 82 to order

CLUB DIRECTORY

Take advantage of our new service directory to promote your pure breed club or association. At present listing is restricted to pedigree farmstock groups so readers can find more out about the breeds they're interested in keeping. Contact us if you want to list your group – it's only $65 per year.

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